
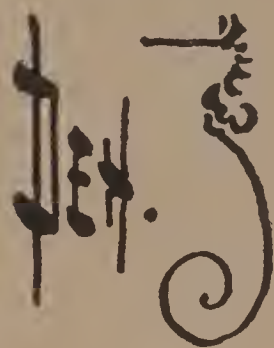


The PEARL and The PUMPKIN: by

Paul West and
W.W. Denslow
with pictures by
Denslow. the
Illustrator of 
"Father Goose" and
"The Wizard of OZ"



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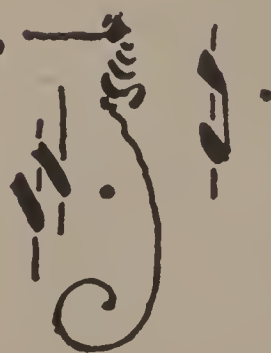
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Dedicated to
Jane and Paul
West Jr.





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He was a little old man.

The Pearl and The Pumpkin.



CHAPTER I.

IN THE PUMPKIN PATCH.

JOE MILLER was a very busy boy. Too busy to notice that the sun was disappearing behind the hills; too busy to feel the chill evening breeze that swept through the cornfield, rustling the shocks and

giving a hint of the passing of autumn and the coming of winter; so busy, in fact, that when little Pearl called to him from the edge of the pumpkin patch, and told him that supper was ready, he did not hear her, but kept right on at what he was doing.

He sat on the ground in the very middle of the pumpkin patch, carving a face on the empty shell of a big, golden pumpkin. In a half circle on the ground about him lay twenty other pumpkins, each with upturned grinning features, showing that Joe must have had a very busy day if he had carved and scooped them all out.

So thought Pearl, as she leaned over the stone wall and watched him cut a square piece from the other side of the pumpkin and scoop out the seeds with his chubby brown hand. Then he sealed the empty shell with the square piece and laid the finished product with the others.

But he was not through his labors as little Pearl supposed, for he rose and rummaged among the vines till he found another pumpkin. And such a pumpkin it was, to be sure!

Resting in a bed of green, how much it was like the great sun now more than half hidden behind the green hills! It was as large as any four other pumpkins in the field; two children with hands clasped could not have surrounded it. A giant pumpkin! A monster pumpkin!

Although Joe tried with all his might to roll the big vegetable over, he could not budge it, and he grunted so (just like the hired man when anyone watched him at work), that Pearl laughed merrily, and the spell was broken.

The boy turned and saw her. He saw with surprise how dark it was, and he rubbed his eyes.

"Hello, Pearl," he said, "is that you?"

"Yes," replied the little girl, "and you must come right home. Supper's been ready a long while."

Joe laid his hand fondly on the big pumpkin.

"Can't I just



fix this last one?" he asked. But the little girl shook her curls decidedly.

"No, you can't," she said. "You'll be late for the party."

"But I'm making Jack-lanterns for the party," the boy insisted, and he might have returned to the giant pumpkin had not Pearl clambered over the stone wall and put her hand on his sleeve. She was only seven and Joe Miller was a man of ten, but he nearly always did as she wished. So he laughed, took her hand, and helped her over the wall,



and they trudged down the path toward the farmhouse.

"I suppose," he said, "if you say so I'll have to come, but after supper, before the party begins, I'll hurry out here and finish that big pumpkin."

"Joe!"

"What, Pearly?"

"You wouldn't come out here all alone in the dark—and on Hallow E'en!"

Joe laughed bravely.

"Pshaw!" he replied, "Why not? I'm not afraid of the witches. If any come near me I'll just cross my fingers and stand near that big elm, and say,

"Witches, witches, can't touch me.

Cross my fingers and touch a tree!"

"Then I'd like to see one that dared do anything."

"But Joe ——"

"Besides, the moon's full, and some of the other boys will be with me. Don't be scared, Pearly."

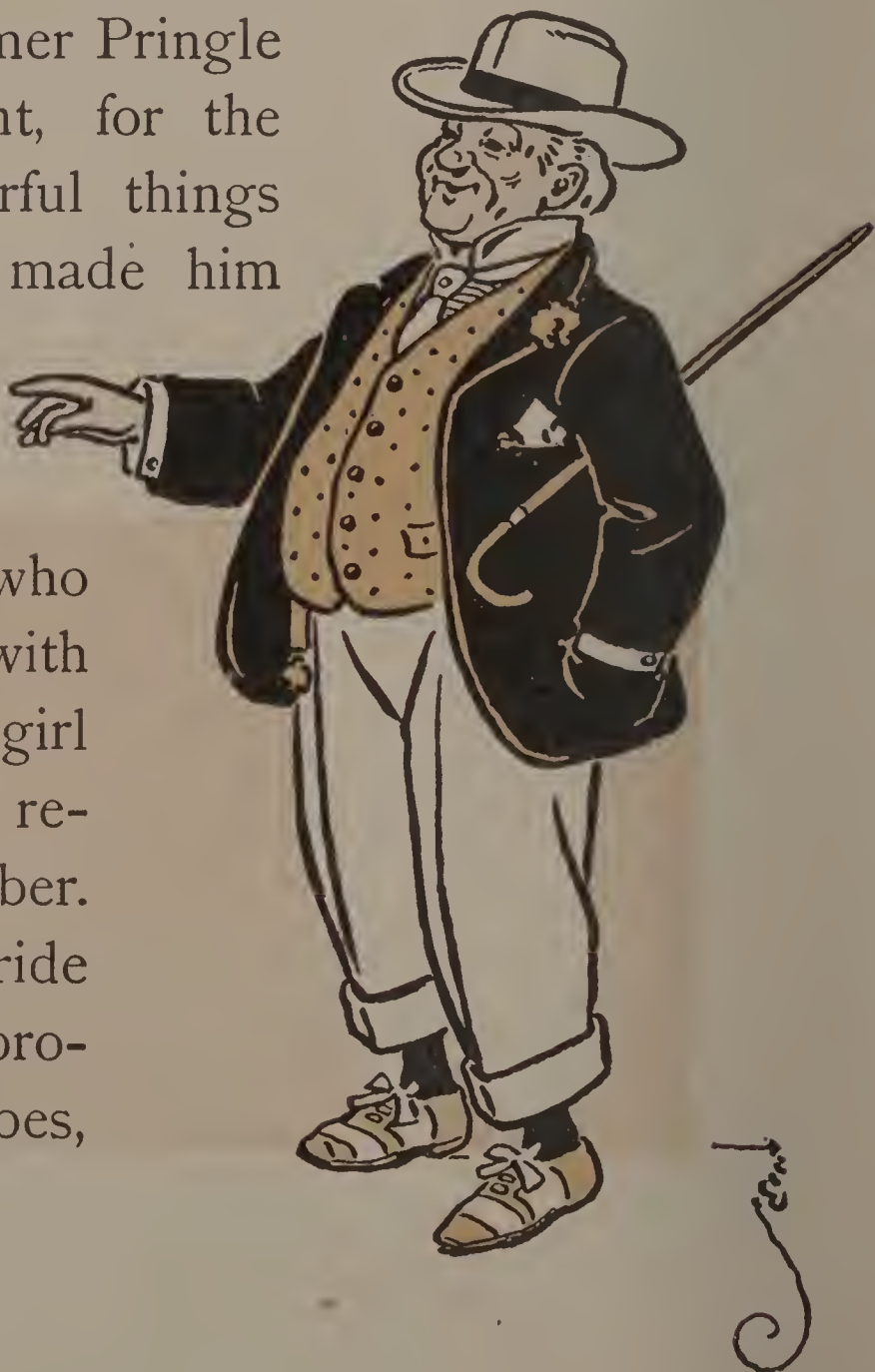
Of course, Pearl knew that Joe was very brave, but this was Hallow E'en. Besides, what could the pumpkins have to do with the party that was to be given in the barn?

Joe must have guessed what she was thinking about, for he said :

“ We’re going to have a lot of fun with those Jack-lanterns. We’ll put candles in them, stick them on bean poles, and when it’s good and dark we’ll have a hobgoblin parade. But you mustn’t tell anybody, and you mustn’t be scared.”

Pearl promised, and they walked on toward the farmhouse.

Pearl’s father, who owned the farm, was called Farmer Pringle all through Vermont, for the fame of the wonderful things raised by him had made him well known. But he was not really a farmer. He was a city merchant who came each May day with his wife and little girl to the country and remained till November. But he took great pride in having his acres produce bigger potatoes,



juicier melons and finer corn than those of his neighbors', and every year his cattle, fruits and vegetables took first prize at County Fair. As for the pumpkins raised on the Pringle farm, they were the best in the world, said everybody, and were sought by pie-makers and canned-preserves men from all over the country.

Some credit for this was due to Joe Miller, Farmer Pringle's nephew, for Joe, though only a boy, had taken care of the pumpkin patch all summer, and the pumpkins had never been so large or solid.

"I think Joe has some secret for making pumpkins grow," said Farmer Pringle one day. "I never saw anything like it."

Whether this was so or not, he had given Joe permission to use all the pumpkins he wanted for Jack-lanterns for Hallow E'en, and Joe had picked out twenty-one of the biggest for himself and his boy friends.

Every year Farmer Pringle gave a party in the big barn, and invited all the village folk. Hallow E'en was the date, and the

family returned to the city next day. This year, as Pearl was such a big girl, the party was given in her name, and she was all expectation as she thought of her duties as hostess.

But one thing troubled her little head, and that was all the fault of Hiram, the farm boy, who had been her playmate till this summer, when Joe Miller came. Pearl liked Joe much better than she did Hiram, and this had put the country boy's nose out of joint, as they say, so that he often made fun of Joe, and called him a "city chap"—but always behind Joe's back. When Pearl told him that Joe was in the pumpkin patch this afternoon, Hiram laughed and said,

"Well, he'd better look out. The pumpkin patch and the cornfield are full of witches."

Pearl was thinking of what Hiram had



said as she and Joe walked on in the gathering darkness.

“Joe,” she pleaded, “you’re not really going out to the pumpkin patch after supper, are you? You—you just said it to tease me, didn’t you?”

“Scared cat!” laughed Joe. “Didn’t I tell you how I could keep the witches away? Besides, if you’re so afraid, you can stand in the doorway and watch me. You can see the pumpkin patch from the house. Look.”

They had reached the gravel path that led to the front door. Behind them on the hill was the pumpkin patch. The full moon was just rising beyond the hill, and as the children turned to look they saw outlined against its silvery surface two figures.

One was tall and thin, the other short and fat, and both were waving their arms excitedly and jumping about.

Pearl and Joe were held spellbound for a moment. Then they turned and rushed into the house with such frightened faces that the family arose from the supper table in alarm, and Farmer Pringle cried,



“Whatever is the matter?”
“Witches in the cornfield!”
shouted the children together.





“Witches in the cornfield!”



CHAPTER II.

THE PIEMAN AND THE CANNER.

WITCHES! If Pearl and Joe had given the two figures a second look how they would have laughed at themselves for being so silly! For in the short one they would surely have recognized an

old friend, Mr. John Doe, the village pie-man. Many a ginger cookie and jelly roll had John Doe left at the Pringle farmhouse, taking in pay pumpkins, rhubarb, currants and peaches with which to make pies. If he was a witch it was in the matter of making pies. John Doe's apple pies, John Doe's pumpkin pies—but let's not talk about them. It makes us too hungry!

He was usually the jolliest of men; but as he stood by the edge of the pumpkin patch looking at the empty shells with their grinning faces, he seemed angry and excited. Over and over and over again he said, in a tearful voice,

“Think of it! The makings of a hundred pies! A hundred pies!” And every time he said this, the other man nodded his head and said,

“And pumpkins scarcer than hens' teeth, too!”

This person the children would not have recognized; but John Doe seemed to know him. He was tall and stylishly dressed. His silk hat, gloved hands and patent-leather shoes

were out of place in a pumpkin patch. But he did not seem to care, and kicked a pumpkin now and then with the toe of his boot.

It is always well to learn the names of people of whom we are going to see much, so we will imagine that the stranger has just given us his card, which reads :

Ike Cannem

CAN-adian & Ameri-CAN

CAN-ning Company

My motto is — "I CAN!"

"It's an outrage," exclaimed John Doe. "My customers saying they won't buy pies unless they're made of Pringle's pumpkins, and he al-



lowing that Joe Miller to use them for Jack-lanterns !”

“My case is worse,” said Mr. Cannem. “I’ve come all the way from my canning factory in Bermuda to get a sample of this particular brand of pumpkin, which is the only kind that will grow down there. And not one left !”

“I offered Pringle five times what I ever paid for pumpkins before,” continued the Pie-man, “and when I found he had given them all to that pesky boy for Hallow E’en foolishness I was so mad I let a whole ovenful of peach tarts burn to a crisp.”

While John Doe was speaking, Cannem had stepped further into the patch, and suddenly caught sight of the giant pumpkin that Joe had failed to hollow out. He tapped it with his boot, and from the sound knew that it was solid.

“Hello,” he exclaimed, “here’s one the boy hasn’t touched.”

“No !” said John Doe, “Really ?”

“He must have forgotten it,” said Cannem. “And if he has it’s ours. Let’s roll it down

the hill to your wagon, take it to your bake-shop and divide it. It isn't much, but it's better than nothing."

"No," said the Pieman, shaking his head, "I wouldn't dare to. That boy never forgot a whopper like this, and if he told Farmer Pringle it was gone, and the farmer found I'd taken it he'd never sell me as much as a pint of gooseberries again."

"What shall we do then?"

"Leave the pumpkin here, and ask Pringle to sell it to us. Seeing as it's the last one, I guess he will."

"Very well. But first let's have supper."

So the Pieman and the Canner, with a last fond look at the great, glistening pumpkin, crept down the road to where John Doe's pie-wagon was standing, and drove off in the direction of the village.

As the wagon started, Cannem turned to Doe, saying,

"Did you hear that?"

"What?" asked the Pieman.

"That laugh."

They listened. From the cornfield, which



was right beside the pumpkin patch, came the sound of chuckling, and in the pale moonlight they saw the piled-up corn shocks waving their loose ends like arms. What they did not see was the giant pumpkin freeing itself from the stem by a wriggle, and rolling toward the stone wall at the edge of the

patch, against which it bumped and lay still again.

"What is it?" asked Cannem, in a whisper.

"Oh, just some of the village people coming to Farmer Pringle's party," said the Pieman. And they drove off. But in the cornfield the chuckling grew louder, and from the biggest shock in the middle of the field came a long, rippling laugh.

A very peculiar cornfield! An extremely odd cornfield!

But then, this was Hallow E'en, you know.





CHAPTER III.

THE HALLOW E'EN PARTY.

DRESSED in her prettiest frock, Pearl received the village people in the big barn, which was decorated with autumn leaves, sumac and golden rod for the great occasion. To the grown people she managed to appear

very dignified and quite like a lady, saying "How do you do?" and "So glad to see you," in just the tone of voice her mother used at her receptions in the city. But when the children came Pearl gave up trying to be stiff and formal, and was soon romping with the merriest of them.

Even Hiram, the farm boy, to whom the fickle little maid had scarcely spoken since he had begun to show his dislike for Joe so openly, found himself dancing and laughing with Pearl, and was quite overjoyed. Games were played, charms were tried, and no children ever had a better time, till, suddenly, Mrs. Pringle, in arranging a dance, discovered that several of the boys were missing.

"Why," she said, in surprise, "Where's Joe Miller?"

"He was here a moment ago," said Mr. Dudley, the village schoolmaster. "I was talking to him about his way of making pumpkins grow."

Then it was found that nearly all the boys had disappeared, no one seemed to know where. But Pearl knew, and so did Hiram.

The little girl recalled with dread Joe's intended return to the pumpkin patch, and Hiram was quick to notice her alarm. He had overheard Joe give the signal to several of the boys to follow him, and was quite angry at not having been included in the fun.

"Huh!" said he to Pearl, "I wouldn't want to be with them out there. The place is just full of witches and goblins, and they'll wish they hadn't gone. Why, I looked up on the hill, just a little while ago, and I saw——"

What Hiram had seen will never be known, for at that moment the big barn doors were thrown open from outside, and in the darkness appeared a crowd of grinning faces, jumping about in the air with no apparent support. Their eyes, noses and mouths gleamed like fire, and their strange antics were accompanied by shivery sounds that made the littlest children run to their mothers and hide their ears and eyes in their gowns.

Even Pearl, who for the moment forgot all that Joe had told her about the hobgoblin parade, began to be frightened, but before she



could reach her mother's side Mr. Pringle and some of the men had rushed out and returned with the merry boys, each bearing a Jack-lantern on the end of a bean pole. Last of all came Joe Miller, laughing at the success of his little plan, but without any Jack-lantern of his own.

"Why, Joe," said Pearl, "I thought you

were going to have the biggest pumpkin for yours?"

"Yes," said his uncle, "where is it, Joe?"

"It's the queerest thing I ever saw," said Joe. "But when I had fixed the other boys' lanterns, and went to get my big pumpkin off the vine I couldn't find it at first. Then I did, but it was away over against the stone wall, though I don't know how it got there. But I took out my knife and started to carve one eye on it, and it rolled away from me just as though it was alive. I chased it, but it rolled right through a hole in the stone wall into the cornfield, and though I followed as fast as I could I didn't find it."

"Witches!" cried Hiram to Pearl. "What did I tell you?"

"Pooh!" said Joe. "I'll go back there and find it bye and bye."

At this moment Mr. John Doe arrived, and with him our new friend, the Canner. The Pieman introduced Mr. Cannem to Farmer Pringle, and they soon found a chance to make an offer for the big pumpkin.



*Each bearing a Jack-lantern,
on the end of a bean pole.*

"You'll have to ask Joe about that," said he, "It belongs to him."

But when Joe was spoken to all he could do was to shake his head and tell how the big pumpkin had rolled away from him.

"It's probably just rolled in among the corn-shocks," said the Pieman, who did not believe in witches. "I think I could find it."

"If we do," said the Canner, "will you sell it to us?"

"Perhaps," said Joe.

Without another word the Pieman and the Canner turned on their heels and hurried off to the pumpkin patch.

Farmer Pringle had saved the best game of the evening for the last. If you have ever bobbed for apples you know what fun it is. A big tub filled to the brim with water was pushed into the middle of the barn



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floor, and a dozen fine, red apples thrown on the surface of the water. Then Farmer Pringle explained the game for those who had never played it, and the fun began.



First to play was Johnny Farnum, the village fat boy. His hands were tied behind his back, and he was told that he would get a prize if he could take a bite from one of the floating apples in the big tub. Beaming with confidence, Johnny leaned over the tub and tried to set his teeth in the largest of the apples. But the moment his mouth touched its red cheek the apple sank, to bob up again a foot away. Nothing daunted, Johnny tried again and again, till, finally losing patience and growing provoked by the shouts of laughter of the other children, he bit savagely at the tantalizing apple and buried his face in the water. He emerged with his eyes closed, spluttering, while the barn rang with merriment.

As he untied Johnny's hands Farmer Pringle said,

"I'm afraid that if you always waited to get apples that way, you'd go without!"

Finally it was Joe's turn.

"Now," said everyone, "we shall see exactly how it should be done."

For Joe was looked upon as being a very bright boy, and, besides, it was noticed that he had watched the efforts of the other boys very carefully, and was not liable to make the same mistakes.

Joe, with his hands tied behind his back, marched proudly to the tub. He leaned over and, selecting a splendid apple as his prey, bent his head till his mouth nearly touched it. But he did not bite at the apple sharply. He had seen that this would not do.

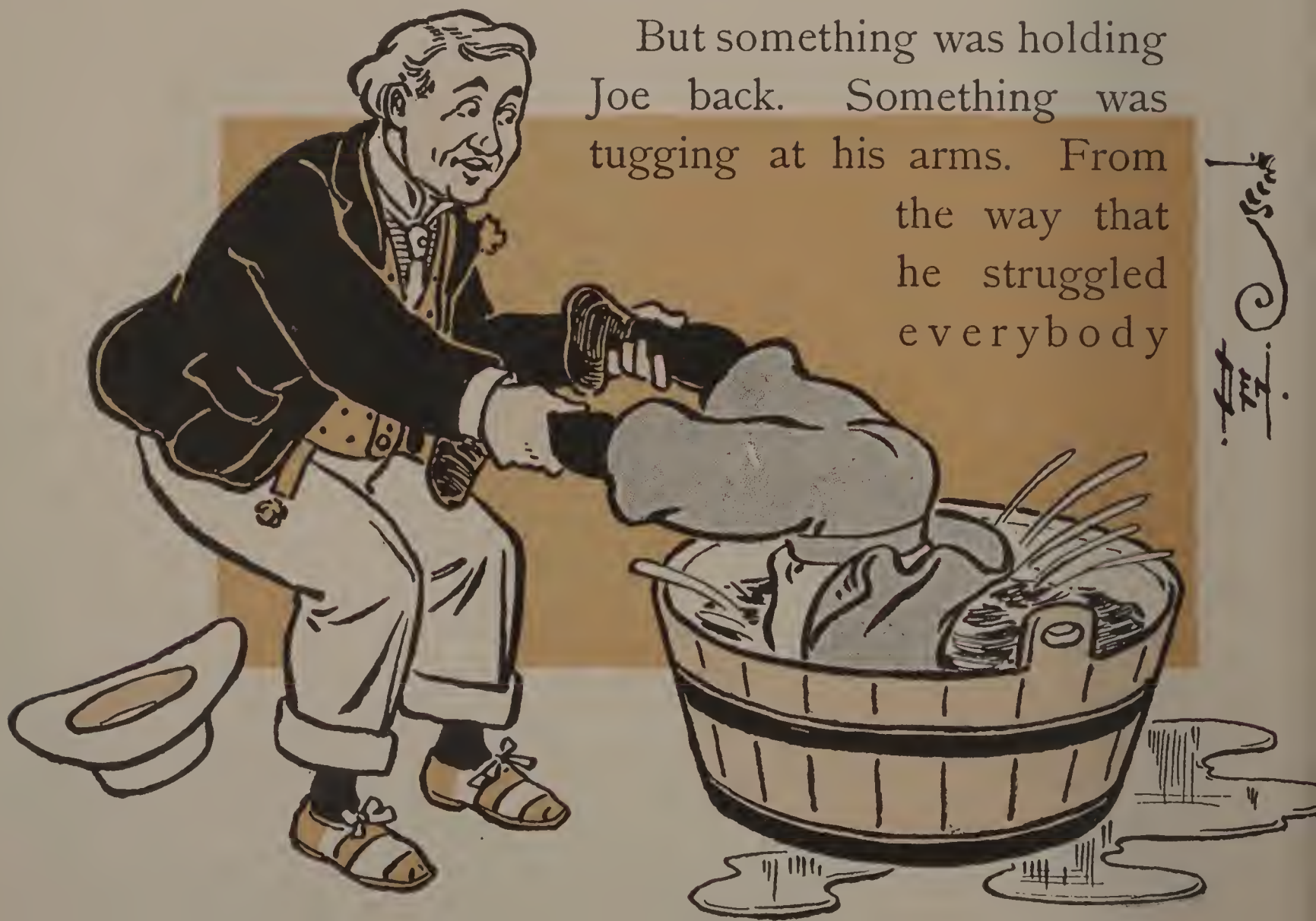
Slowly, carefully, he opened his mouth. Then he reached nearer to the apple, and began to close his teeth as carefully as he had opened them. They touched the sides of the apple.

Everyone was craning his neck to see what Joe would do next. The apple did not move

away from him as it had from the others. Closer and closer together he brought his teeth, till it seemed as though now he could surely seize the apple between them. Those nearest the tub could see Joe's teeth entering the skin of the fruit; could hear them crunching it carefully, and then ——

His feet flew from under him; he pitched head foremost into the tub with a splash that threw a shower of water into the air. Pearl and the girls screamed, the boys shouted with joy, and Farmer Pringle, rushing forward, caught Joe by the heels and tried to pull him out.

But something was holding Joe back. Something was tugging at his arms. From the way that he struggled everybody



knew that he was in trouble, and the Pieman and the Canner, who entered the barn while this was happening, ran to help Farmer Pringle.

"I can't get out," cried Joe.

"Pull, pull," shouted Pearl's father.

"Now, altogether," said the Pieman, and with a heave they exerted all their strength. There was a splash as they lifted Joe from the tub, and all fell in a heap on the floor. At the same instant there came a voice from the big tub saying,

"Wait for me!"

Spellbound, grown people and children looked, and saw, standing up to his waist in the water, the strangest creature that had ever met their view.

He was a little, old man, with a tanned and weather-beaten face, from which hung a mass of tangled white whiskers. On his head was an oil-skin cap of the kind that sailors call "sou'westers." The collar of his oil-skin coat was turned up high about his ears. In one hand he held an old crossbow, and in the other he carried a large white bird with a red

beak, and web feet which dangled down under his arm.

Seaweed hung in festoons from the stranger's hat and coat, and from a side pocket peeped a crab, which immediately withdrew from sight, waving its claws. The old man's presence filled the barn with the savor of the deep, deep sea.

Turning to Joe, Farmer Pringle said,

"My boy, is this one of your jokes?"

But Joe could only stare at his uncle. Now the Pieman stepped forward and demanded of the old man, who still stood in the middle of the tub.

"Well, sir, who are you, and what do you want?"

The sea-faring man turned his sad, gray eyes toward the Pieman, and said, in a voice that seemed to come from the barn cellar,

"Might I trouble you for a glass of water?"

"Water!" cried Farmer Pringle, "Water! Why, you look as though you had plenty!"

The stranger raised the arm holding the crossbow, swept his hand before him, and replied,



“Water, water everywhere;
But ^{NOR ANY} not a drop to drink!”

At these words Mr. Dudley, the Schoolmaster, ran forward, crying,

“Welcome, welcome, illustrious sir!” Then, turning to all, “Don’t you recognize him?”

“No,” came the answer. “Who is he?”

“Who,” said the Schoolmaster, shaking the old man’s hand, and helping him to step from the tub, “Who but the ANCIENT MARINER!”



CHAPTER IV.

THE ANCIENT MARINER'S STORY.

R

RIGHT you are, Mate!" roared the old man, heartily, slapping the Schoolmaster on the back and leaving there the mark of a large, wet hand. "Right you are, but how did you guess?"

"Why," laughed the Schoolmaster, "we knew you by your crossbow."

"Yes," added Farmer Pringle, "and by the albatross."

At this the Ancient Mariner, for it was he, hugged the body of the bird closer to his side, and burst into tears, sobbing,

"I am sorry I did it, I am sorry I did it; but it was a new crossbow and I wanted to try it on something alive."

The older children, and most of the grown-ups, I suppose, knew what it was that the Ancient Mariner was so sorry for. But the little ones, like Pearl, had never heard of him and wondered at his tears. Joe saw the puzzled frown on Pearl's face and, while Farmer Pringle was trying to cheer the Ancient Mariner, he explained the situation to her.

"You see, Pearl," said Joe, "the Ancient Mariner was a sailor, and sailors think it's awful bad luck to shoot an albatross, which is a bird like that one he's carrying. But the Ancient Mariner shot one, and then there came a great calm over the ocean, and the crew

died of fever and thirst, and ever since then he's been travelling all over the world telling folks how it happened."

The Ancient Mariner must have had very sharp ears, for he overheard Joe and, turning to him, said,

"Who's been here ahead of me, spinning my yarn?"

"Nobody, sir," replied Joe, "I read all about you in a poem."

"A poem!" exclaimed the old man. "And who's been writing any poems about me? Show him to me!"

The Schoolmaster hastened to assure the Ancient Mariner that the man who had made him famous in a poem had been dead many years. This seemed to relieve his mind, for he was soon seated before the big stove, in which there was a roaring fire, drinking a cup of hot coffee, and smiling.

"And now, sir, if you are quite comfortable——" began Farmer Pringle.

"Quite," said the Ancient Mariner. "And all I ask is, don't bother me no more."

"But," Farmer Pringle insisted, "don't you

think we ought to be told how you happened to make your appearance through that tub of water, and what you want here?"

"All in good time," said the old man. "Another cup of coffee, please."

Seeing that it would do no good to hurry him, Farmer Pringle motioned to everyone to leave the old man alone till he had finished his coffee. The Ancient Mariner swallowed the second cupful at a gulp, as he had the first, and, with his crossbow on his knees and the albatross on the floor beside him, spoke as follows:

"After that unfortunate affair of mine with the albatross," he said, "I roamed the world for some hundred years or more, trying to tell folks

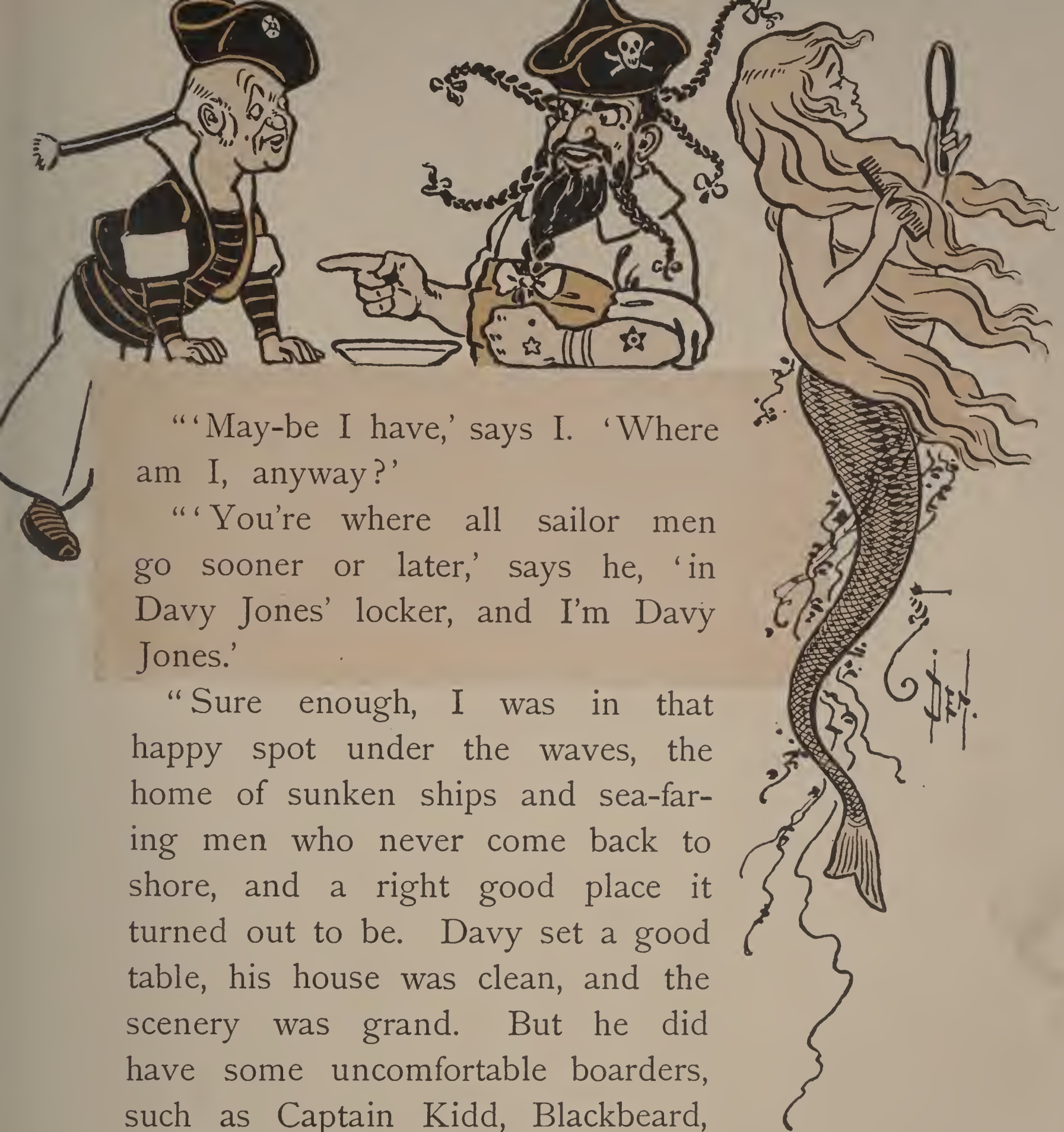


all about how I happened to do it, and how sorry I was. It got pretty tiresome, telling the same story over and over again, and one day I sat beside the sea, wishing it was all ended.

“Suddenly a big wave came rolling in, and before I could say ‘Jack Robinson’ I was going down, down, down to the very bottom of the ocean. I suppose I was drowned, for the next thing I knew I was lying in a snug bunk and an old man was bending over me. As I opened my eyes, he says,

“‘Ahoy, Shipmate, so you’ve come to board with me, eh?’





“‘May-be I have,’ says I. ‘Where am I, anyway?’

“‘You’re where all sailor men go sooner or later,’ says he, ‘in Davy Jones’ locker, and I’m Davy Jones.’

“Sure enough, I was in that happy spot under the waves, the home of sunken ships and sea-faring men who never come back to shore, and a right good place it turned out to be. Davy set a good table, his house was clean, and the scenery was grand. But he did have some uncomfortable boarders, such as Captain Kidd, Blackbeard, and other pirates.

“They were never satisfied, these pirates, and always complaining about the food, though goodness knows, poor old Davy had hard work to feed all those mouths, with no help but a lot of mermaids that were always think-

ing more about combing their hair than getting dinner.

“But affairs reached their height one day when a Yankee ship came sinking down from above with a hole clean through her. We searched her larder, and found among other things a lot of pumpkin pies. They were a trifle water-soaked, to be sure, but when you haven’t had a pumpkin pie for a hundred years ’most any kind of a pumpkin pie tastes good.

“And how those pirates did eat those pies! They never complained about anything while the pies lasted, and Davy was beginning to think he had got them satisfied, when one day the last of the pies were gone.

“Such a howl! The pirates demanded more. Davy showed them the empty pantry in the coral caves. ‘Then make some,’ says the pirates. ‘How can I,’ says Davy, without any pumpkins?’ ‘Grow some pumpkins,’ says the pirates, ‘or we’ll pull your house down over your ears.’

“So Davy appealed to me.

“‘Ancient,’ says he, ‘what can I do? I’ve

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*“Such a howl!
The pirates demand more.”*



tried to raise pumpkins down here,
but it's no go.'

"At that blessed moment who should come along but a flying fish we happened to know. He had been chatting with a crow, he said, that very morning, who had told him of a wonderful boy up in Vermont who had invented a pumpkin that would grow anywhere.

"'That's the boy for me,' says Davy. 'Ancient, will you make a trip back to earth and see if you can find him?'

"I was off on the back of the next shark that came along, and here I am. As for my coming up through that tub of water, it was all arranged by Mother Carey, who is a sort

of fairy godmother to everyone under the sea. And now, if I could have another cup of coffee, and you could tell me if you ever heard of that boy the flying fish told us about, I'd be obliged."

Can you imagine how Joe Miller felt as he heard the Ancient Mariner's story? Had his fame as a pumpkin raiser reached the bottom of the ocean? He felt very proud at the thought.

Then another idea came to him.

It was true that he had discovered a secret by which he believed that he could make pumpkins grow better and bigger and in places where a pumpkin had never grown before. But it was his secret. Why should he give it to everyone? No, he would not tell the Ancient Mariner.

Whether the old man was able to read Joe's thoughts or not, he cast a searching glance toward the boy at that moment, and Joe blushed and hid behind some other lads.

"Aha!" thought the Ancient Mariner, "I believe that's the boy!"

At this moment Farmer Pringle looked at

his watch and discovered that it was nearly midnight.

"Attention!" he called. "This is Hallow E'en, and you all know that at the hour of twelve the most wonderful things are said to happen. Witches dance, charms come true, wishes are granted. Some of you may want to try some of these wonders. So, as your parents are willing, I'm going to take you all out to the cornfield, where the boys and girls can see for themselves if the stories about Hallow E'en are true or just fairy tales."

How the children cheered! This was indeed a treat for them. All was bustle and commotion, as the girls, who had found a big broken mirror, divided it into smaller pieces, so that each might carry a bit to the cornfield, and there, in the light of the moon, gaze into it and see the face of her beau reflected over her shoulder.

The boys chattered gaily of tricks that they would play on the girls, and the barn door was thrown open, revealing the cornfield on the hill, and the moon shining above it.

As the procession, headed by Joe and Pearl

and the Schoolmaster, started from the barn, Farmer Pringle turned to the Ancient Mariner, who still sat by the stove, and said,

“Won’t you come along, sir, and join the fun? Afterward we can talk about Davy Jones and the pumpkins.”

But the Ancient Mariner shook his head, and, pointing to John Doe and the Canner, who also lingered, said,

“No, thanks, Captain. These gentlemen and I are going to wait here for you if you don’t mind.”

“Not at all,” said Farmer Pringle. Then, turning to the impatient children, “Come on, boys and girls, to the cornfield.”

The merry procession, shouting and laughing, ran into the moonlight. The Pieman and the Canner and the Ancient Mariner watched the last one leave the barn, and then the old man, with surprising agility, hurried across the barn floor and shut the big door.



CHAPTER V.

MOTHER CAREY'S CHICKENS.

AND now, Shipmates," said the Ancient Mariner, fixing his glittering eye on the Pieman and the Canner, "what's to be done?"

"Done?" they repeated, "What do you mean?"

"O, come," laughed the old man, "don't try

to fool the Ancient Mariner. You are a pie-man, I believe, Mr. Cake?"

"Doe," said the Pieman.

"Excuse me, Mr. Doe. And your friend is a Canner. Exactly. So you're both interested in pumpkins, similar to me. And my glittering eye tells me that you're both worried. And what does my glittering eye tell me you're worried about, Mr. Pie?"

"Doe," said the Pieman.

"Doe it is, sir. Why, about pumpkins, to be sure. And, being pumpkins, you're naturally interested in that boy, Joe Miller, for I know, and you know, and the flying fish that told Davy Jones knew, that he's the boy with the wonderful secret for making pumpkins grow. That's what my glittering eye tells me, Mr. ——"

"Doe," said the Pieman. "You're quite right, sir. But it's no use trying to get Joe's secret. He won't tell it. We've both tried, and failed."

And then he told the Ancient Mariner all about the way Joe had used the pumpkin crop for Jack-lanterns, and the strange affair

of the giant pumpkin, which had rolled away from the boy and hidden itself in the cornfield.

At this the Ancient Mariner jumped to his feet.

"Cornfield," he exclaimed. "Did you say there was a cornfield near the pumpkin patch?"

"Right next to it," replied the Canner. "Why?"

"I see it all," said the Ancient Mariner. "Shipmates, it's necessary for us to get that big pumpkin. The Pieman must have some of it for pies, Mr. Canner needs a slice or two to plant in Bermuda, and if I don't take part of it back to Davy Jones to plant under the ocean to raise pumpkin pies for those pirates, I shall never dare go back. But if it's rolled into the cornfield there's only one person who can get it for us."

"And who is that?" asked the Pieman and the Canner together.

"The Corn Dodger, Shipmates."

"The Corn Dodger?" repeated Mr. Cannem. "Who is he?"

"I don't suppose you ever heard of him,"

said the Ancient Mariner, "but the Corn Dodger is the sprite that rules everything that grows in the ground. He's the guardian spirit of the corn and all such garden truck, including pumpkins. If the potatoes don't behave he sends potato-bugs to punish them. No mortal ever sees him, but people like me, who are sort of half-ghosts, all know him. This being Hallow E'en, he's more likely to show himself, and if we can find him, and he's in a good humor, he may help us. If not, there's nothing to be done."

"Then let's find the Corn Dodger," said the Pieman, hastily. "Come on." Picking up his crossbow and the Albatross, the Ancient Mariner followed the Pieman and the Canner across the barn floor. As they reached the big door it flew open, and Hiram Hubbard, the farm boy, trembling in every limb, fell at their feet, crying,



"Oh, save me!"

At the same moment a shout of boyish laughter was heard, and Joe Miller's voice crying,

"Oh, Hiram! 'Fraid cat! 'Fraid cat!"

Then a Jack-lantern flashed in the darkness and disappeared.

"What's the matter, Hiram?" asked the Pieman.

"Oh," cried the boy, "did you see it? It came rushing at me out of the darkness and chased me all the way back here. Don't let it get me."

The Ancient Mariner laughed loud and long. "Why," said he, "that was only Joe Miller and another of his Jack-lanterns."

"Well," said Hiram, frowning, "if it was I'll get even. Joe's been scaring me all night with those things, and I won't stand it any more."

An idea seemed to strike the Ancient Mariner, and he whispered to the Canner.

"Maybe this boy can help us," he said. "Joe won't tell us his secret, but he might tell another boy like Hiram."

The Canner nodded his head, and spoke to Hiram, telling him what they wished to find out.

“You get Joe’s secret,” he said, “and we’ll help you to get even with him for scaring you.”

“I’ll do it,” said Hiram.

“We must hurry,” said the Ancient Mariner, “for if I don’t start back for Davy Jones’ locker in half an hour he’ll be up here for me, and there’s no telling what he might do.”

With the Pieman leading the way, and Hiram following in the rear, trembling at every sound, the quartette soon reached the cornfield, where they found the merry-makers in the midst of their fun.

In the bright moonlight, the shocks of corn husks looked like great, silent sentinels, their loose leaves waving in the night wind like many arms. The field was covered with these shocks, to the number of fifty or more, and in the very center stood one larger than all the rest. At this the Ancient Mariner looked closely with his glittering eye, as he, the

Pieman, the Canner and Hiram entered the cornfield.

Said he to the Pie-
man,

“If the Corn Dodger is about here, and there can't be much doubt of it, my glittering eye tells me that he's hiding in that big corn shock in the middle of the field. If we could only get the other folks away for awhile I'd find out.”

While trying to think of some plan to do this, the Ancient Mariner and his friends mingled with the crowd of fun-makers. Hiram led Joe

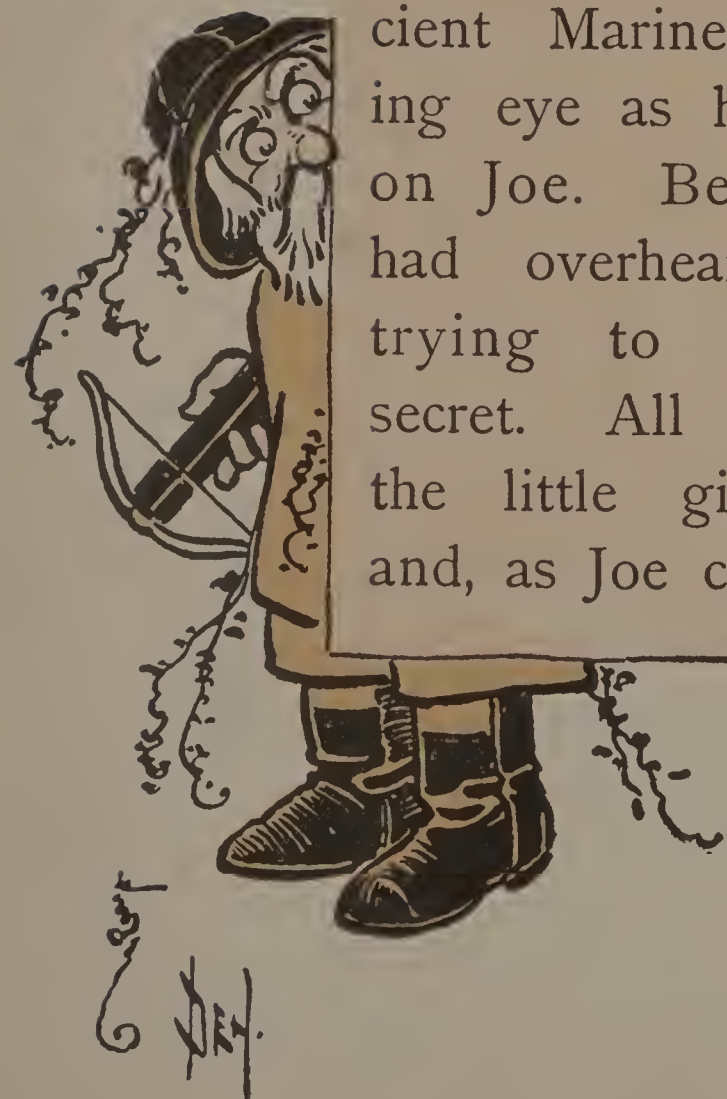


Miller aside as soon as he could, and tried by every means to get him to tell his secret of making pumpkins grow. But Joe said he had no time now to explain it.

"Some day, Hiram," said he, "I'll tell you all about it. Now, I want to play."

The Pieman and the Canner searched about the bottoms of the corn shocks to see if the giant pumpkin was concealed in one of them, but their efforts to find it were useless. Wherever the Corn Dodger had taken it he had hidden it well.

Pearl noticed their actions, and now and then caught the Ancient Mariner's glittering eye as he fixed it on Joe. Besides, she had overheard Hiram trying to get Joe's secret. All this made the little girl uneasy, and, as Joe came to her



to ask her to join him in a new game, she said,

“Joe, don’t go very far away from papa till we get back to the house; will you, please?”

“Why not, Pearl?” laughed the boy. “I’m not afraid of witches.”

“It isn’t witches,” said Pearl, “unless the Ancient Mariner is a witch. You know what he said about coming up here to get some pumpkins from you to take under the sea? And the Pieman and that Canner man want some, too; and I heard Hiram trying to make you tell him how you grow such wonderful pumpkins. Oh, Joe, haven’t you seen how the Ancient Mariner looks at you all the time? I’m afraid they’re going to do something to you.”

“Don’t be silly,” said the boy, but his voice trembled a little as he said it, for he could feel a chilly sensation at the back of his neck, and knew that it was the Ancient Mariner looking at him. “I studied hard and worked hard to find out how to make the biggest pumpkins grow, and they won’t get my secret or a single

pumpkin. But let's not think about it now. We've got to go home in a few minutes, and must have a good time till then."

So busily had the two children been talking that they had not seen the others hurrying to the very furthest corner of the cornfield, where there was a group of old trees, and a spring over which the boys and girls were going to try some charms. As Joe, holding Pearl's hand, turned to follow the others, the cornfield became suddenly as dark as though the moon had not been shining, and for a moment he and Pearl stood trembling with fear and surprise. But the next instant the shock of corn nearest them seemed surrounded with a circle of green light, and out of the ground before it stepped a beautiful lady, bearing a wand. She smiled sweetly at the astonished children, and waved her wand. At this, eight others, each nearly as beautiful, appeared beside her. Then the first who had appeared spoke, and her voice was so pleasant that whatever fear the children might have had vanished instantly.

"I wish you a merry Hallow E'en," said the lady. "Do you know who I am?"

"Y-yes, ma'am," replied Joe, "you're a fairy."

"You are right," replied the lady, "I am Mother Carey, the Fairy of the Seas."

"Mother Carey!" exclaimed Pearl. "Then these others must be your Chickens."

The little girl was almost ashamed of her boldness in speaking, but the fairy only smiled, saying,

"Yes, I am Mother Carey, and these are Mother Carey's Chickens. And we have come to see you on a matter of great importance!"





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CHAPTER VI.

THE CORN DODGER.

E must speak very quickly," said Mother Carey, "for if the Ancient Mariner sees me all may be lost. So let us keep in the shadow of this big corn shock, and I'll tell you why I have come up, all the

way from my coral caves under the ocean, to see you."

Joe and Pearl, at a sign from the fairy, seated themselves in the midst of a group formed by her Chickens, who, as they afterward learned, were named Sea Mew, Wave Crest, Scallop, White Cap, Foam, Billow, Nautilus and Anemone. Their gowns were made of filmy lace—pale green like the sea where the sun shines into its depths, or dark blue where the shadows fall—and trimmed with seaweeds of the most beautiful colors. Their wings flashed and glistened in the pale light, like leaves wet with dew. Mother Carey herself was dressed as the others, only her garments were even more beautiful. As she stood before them, keeping a sharp lookout on the other side of the field to note the approach of the Ancient Mariner or anyone else, Pearl and Joe thought they had never seen any lady nearly so lovely.

"As I have told you," said Mother Carey, "I am the fairy of the seas. Beneath the ocean, in my region of the Coral Caves, I am all powerful, owning no allegiance to anyone

but King Neptune. On the earth I possess no power over mortals. Near my palace is the home of a quaint old character named Davy Jones, who keeps a sailors' boarding house.

"Now, Davy Jones and I are friends, as a rule, but it is he and his servant, the Ancient Mariner, against whom I wish to warn you. You know how eager Davy is to find a pumpkin that he can make grow under the ocean, so as to provide his piratical boarders with pumpkin pies, and you have heard the Ancient Mariner tell how he was sent on earth to procure the secret.

"Davy and the Pirates are impatiently awaiting his return, and if he goes back empty-handed they may seek to be revenged on you. So, my little boy, if you have this wonderful secret, I advise you to tell it to the Ancient Mariner."

"Oh, do, Joe. Won't you, please?" interrupted Pearl, with tears in her eyes. "Do, for just think how I should feel if those terrible Pirates did anything to you. Why, they might make you walk the board."

Pearl meant to say, "Walk the plank," which,

she had heard, was some terrible punishment that Pirates gave their victims.

“Well,” said Joe, “I hate to part with my secret, for I’ve worked hard over it. But I don’t want any trouble with Pirates, I’m very sure; so, if the Ancient Mariner asks me, I’ll tell him.”

“That’s a very wise boy,” said Mother Carey, and the Chickens all nodded, to show that they quite agreed with her.

As for Pearl, she was quite beside herself with joy.

“And when you tell him,” she said, “perhaps he won’t look at you any more, as he does now, with that glittering eye.”

“I think you are doing a very proper thing, Joe,” said Mother Carey, “and now, as I can be of no further service to you on earth, I’ll say good-night. But, if by any chance you should ever come within my regions remember to call on me if you need my help.”

“Thank you, Ma’am,” said Pearl and Joe.

“Take this talisman,” said the Fairy, handing Joe a sea-shell. “You probably will never need to use it, in which case it will be a

souvenir of my visit. But if you do need to, just place it to your lips and blow loudly

three times. I will hear and answer. And now I'll say good-night again."

If Mother Carey did not wish to be seen by the others, she was none too soon in making her disappearance, for at this moment the cornfield was filled with the shouts of the merry-makers, hunting for Pearl and Joe to join them in a new game which was to end the evening's fun.

As she heard these shouts, Mother Carey waved her wand, kissed her hand to Pearl and Joe and, with her Chickens, vanished as suddenly as she had ap-





*"Take this talisman,"
said the Fairy.*

W. H. D.

peared. The boy and girl rubbed their eyes in astonishment, and would scarcely have believed that they had really been talking to fairies but for the sea-shell which Joe still clutched in his hand.

As the first of the merry-makers neared them he hid this in his pocket.

The new game consisted of a funny march, which the Schoolmaster had invented for the occasion. He called it the "Witches' Parade." The boys, with Jack-o'lanterns, and the girls with cornstalk fiddles, which squeaked shrilly, were to head a procession down the lane as far as the barn and back to the cornfield again. The Schoolmaster said that they would get back to the field at exactly midnight and, just as the clocks was tolling the hour, he was to stand over the old spring among the trees and look into its depths, while all were to shout loudly,

"Witches, fairies, sprites and elves,
If you are there, come show yourselves!"

"And if there are such things," said the Schoolmaster, "they will certainly appear at midnight of Hallowe'en, if at no other time."

While all the rest were busy preparing for the parade, the Ancient Mariner, the Pieman, the Canner and Hiram found a chance to slip away, and sought the middle of the cornfield, where the big corn shock stood.

Hiram had failure to report as a result of his efforts to induce Joe to part with his secret, and as but a few minutes remained before midnight the Ancient Mariner was eager to summon the Corn Dodger and ask for his aid.

"This is the biggest corn shock," said the Pieman, as they



reached the middle of the cornfield. "Now bring out your Corn Dodger."

"All in good time, Mr. Crust," said the Ancient Mariner.

"My name is not Crust, but Doe," the Pie-man corrected him

"Never mind, Shipmate, as long as I gets somewhere near it. The thing is now to entice my friend out of the corn shock if he's in there, and my glittering eye tells me is. Which one of you is best at making a noise like a cabbage?"

All looked at Hiram. Just why, the boy did not know. But they seemed to think that he should volunteer.

"I—I can make a noise like a pig squealing," said Hiram, "but I never tried to imitate a cabbage. Perhaps if you told me how I might."

"Maybe we can get along without it," said the Ancient Mariner. "Any way, we'll have to try. Now," speaking to the Canner, "if you'll stand over here, behind this corn shock, we'll see. You," indicating Hiram, "get behind that shock, and," to the Pieman, "you take this one, please, Mr. Biscuits."

"I wish," said the Pieman, "that you would try to remember my name. It is Doe, and not Biscuits."

"Well," replied the Ancient Mariner, "Dough is Biscuits, and Biscuits is Dough. Now, if I called you Apple-sauce or Raspberry-jam, it would be something to complain about; but as long as I keep to things around the bake-shop I wish you wouldn't be so particular. We are here for something more important."

Thus reproved, the Pieman took his place behind an adjoining corn shock, and the Ancient Mariner, after a pause, bowed to the big shock, and said,

"Oh, Corn Dodger, the potato bugs are eating the potatoes, the caterpillars are devouring the tomatoes, and I think Jack Frost is getting ready to nip the toes of the beets and carrots. Come forth and save them."

Suddenly there was a rustling in the big shock, which rocked back and forth, and finally burst apart, revealing to the astonished eyes of the three mortals the strangest creature they had ever seen..

His body was shaped like a huge ear of

corn, on top of which was set a funny little head, surmounted with corn-silk which took the place of hair. His clothes were formed of the husks of corn, and his legs and arms were clad in bright green. He sprang from the corn shock with a bound, crying,

“Who calls the Corn Dodger from his lair?”

The Ancient Mariner held out his hand in greeting.

“Hello, Dodger, old boy,” he said. “Don’t you know me?”

“Why, how do you do, Ancient?” replied the Sprite of the Corn.

“And what are you doing here?”

“That’s too long a story,



Dodger," said the Ancient Mariner. "First let me tell you what I want."

"But how about those vegetables that need my help?" asked the Corn Dodger. "What's that about potato bugs?"

"Forgive me, Dodger. I only made that up to get you out. I'm here to ask your aid in a very pressing matter. But before we go on, I want to introduce you to some friends of mine."

Hiram, the Pieman and the Canner stepped out from behind the corn shocks. As the Corn Dodger saw them he uttered a shriek and jumped back, crying, "Mortals!"

"They won't hurt you, Dodger," said the Ancient Mariner. "This here is my friend Hiram Hubbard. Shake hands with him."

The Corn Dodger took Hiram's hand and shook it, and then turned to the Pieman.

"And this gentleman," said the Ancient Mariner, "is a valuable member of the village, Mr. John Cruller."

"Doe, Doe, Doe," said the Pieman. "Not Cruller."

"Very glad to meet you," said the Corn Dodger, and then Mr. Cannem approached.

"Mr. Cannem," explained the Ancient Mariner, "cans things."

The Corn Dodger shook with fear.

"Cans things?" he repeated, weakly; "including corn?"

"Including corn," said the Canner, looking meaningly at the Dodger. For such a large, luscious ear of corn as the Dodger's body he had never seen, and he was already figuring out how many cans at twenty-five cents apiece it would make.

But the Ancient Mariner said,

"Don't be alarmed. He don't mean any harm to you. We need your help, Dodger, and you needn't be afraid of getting canned."

"Just the same, I am," said the Dodger, "and always shall be. A fortune-teller told me once that it would be my fate, and I always carry a can-opener in case I should be canned, so as to cut my way out. Another thing is my fear of being popped, and often I nearly freeze on cold nights rather than go near a fire."

"We're sorry," said the Ancient Mariner, "but this is no time for tears. To business, Dodger. Do you know a boy named Joe Miller?"

"I 'should say so," replied the Dodger. "He's destroyed all the pumpkins on the farm for Jack-lanterns. What do you want of him?"

Thereupon the Ancient Mariner recited the whole story, ending by asking the Corn Dodger's aid in securing Joe's wonderful secret.

"I'm sorry, Ancient," said the Dodger, "but I'm afraid I can't help you. You see, I ought to take revenge on Joe Miller for destroying so many pumpkins, but, on the other hand, he's done a lot for me by discovering this secret of making pumpkins grow. We never had such big ones till he began to putter around here, or so many. I couldn't afford to do anything to him."

"Then won't you give us that one big pumpkin that's left? You know where it is."

"I can't do that either," said the Dodger, shaking his head. "It belongs to Joe, and, besides, if anyone gets it I want it for a sample when I make my report at headquarters this winter."

"If I could only get Joe under the water for a few minutes," said the Ancient Mariner,

"I'll wager I could make him give up his secret."

"But you can't," said the Dodger. "That is, in his present form. Now, if you could only change him into something else, eh?"

The Ancient Mariner's face brightened.

"Splendid," he exclaimed. "Will you do that for me?"

"I can't, exactly," said the Corn Dodger. "You ought to know enough about such things, being around with fairies as much as you have. But I'll tell you what. I can put a spell on him, so that if he should wish to be anything else, just at midnight, he would change right into that very thing."

"Well, that's better than nothing," said the Ancient Mariner, but the Pieman seemed to doubt it.

"Joe Miller's too well satisfied with being Joe Miller," he said, "to wish to be anything else."

"Unless we could put it into his head," added the Canner, lighting a cigar and throwing the burning match on the ground. The flame caught the dried grass, and soon a merry little fire was blazing just behind the Corn Dodger, who, however, did not see it.

"We'll try it, anyway," said the Ancient Mariner, "and we're much obliged to you, Dodger. Any message to send to Davy Jones?"

"Yes," said the Dodger, "you might——" Pop! Pop! Pop! The flames from the grass fire had caught him, and here and there on his body little white spots appeared, like flakes of snow. He was popping!

The Ancient Mariner rushed forward, hat in hand, to rescue his friend, but the Corn Dodger did not wait for mortal assistance, but leaped head-foremost into the corn-shock, which closed about him, and he was gone. The Canner picked up the pieces

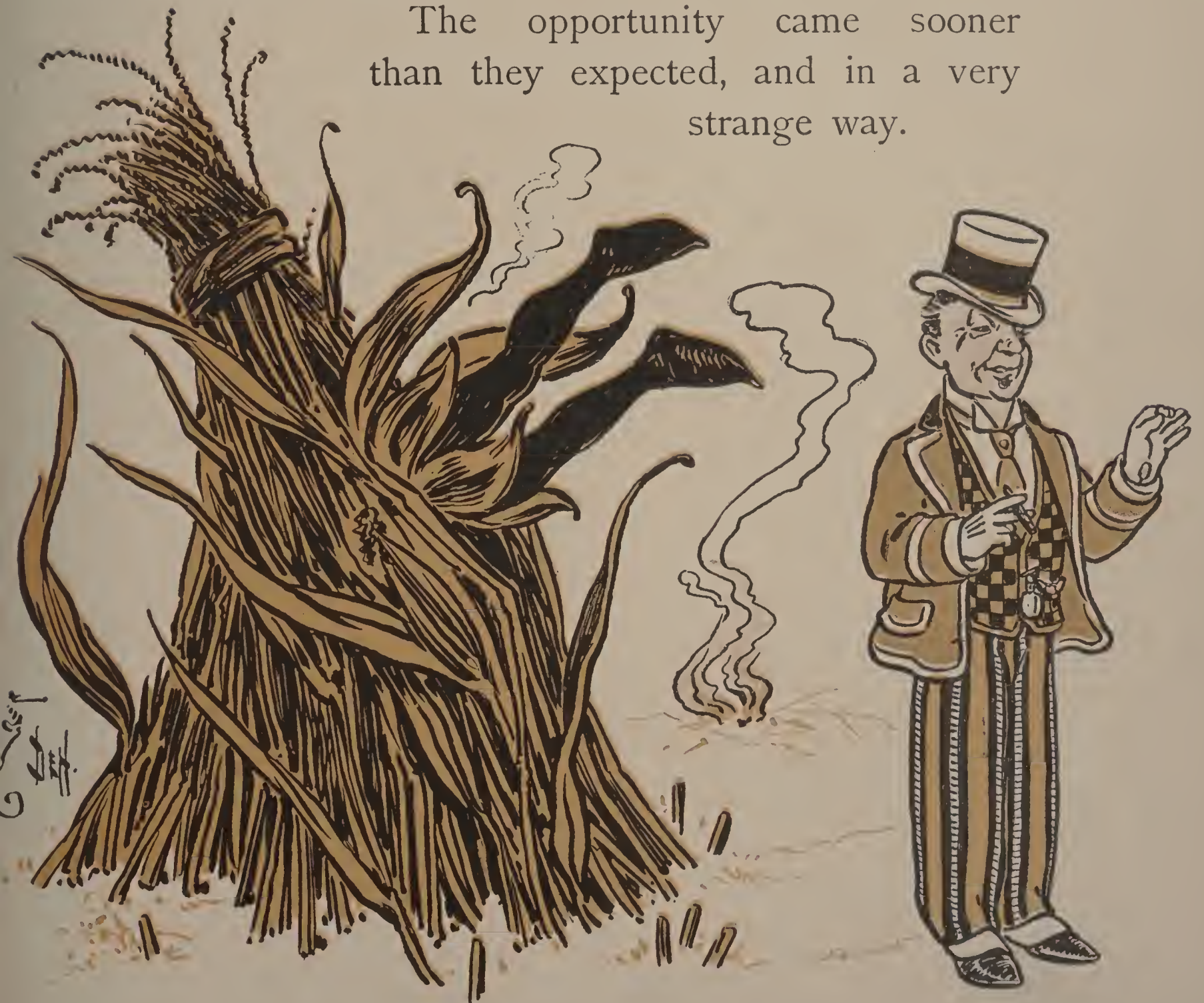


of popped corn which had fallen to the ground, and ate them.

"Not bad, not bad," he said, smacking his lips. "I could get forty cents a can for such corn as that. I'll keep an eye on the Corn Dodger."

But how were the conspirators to make Joe Miller wish that he might be changed into something or somebody else? It was now but five minutes to midnight, and soon the chance would be gone.

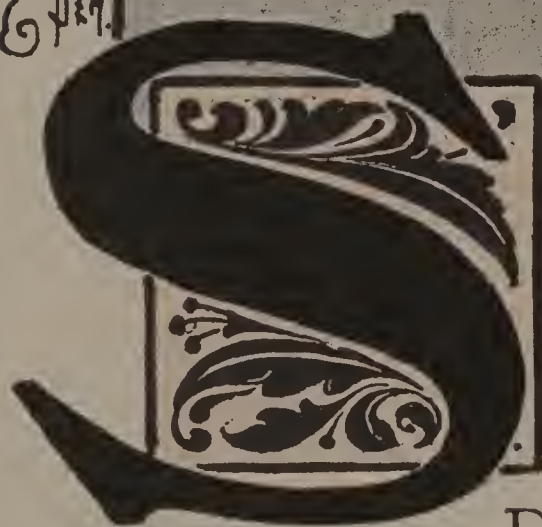
The opportunity came sooner than they expected, and in a very strange way.





CHAPTER VII.

“PUMPKIN-HEAD!”



SILVERLY had the Corn Dodger disappeared when Joe Miller's cheery voice was heard, and he and Pearl, followed by Farmer Pringle and several others, came running across the cornfield to

where the Ancient Mariner and his friends stood.

"Hello, Joe," said the Ancient Mariner, trying to appear as jolly as possible, "we thought you had begun your witches' parade."

"So we did, sir," replied Joe, "but it wasn't much fun for me without any Jack-o'lantern. I gave them all away to the other boys, you know, intending to make mine out of the big pumpkin that I lost."

"So we've come back to have one more look for it," said Farmer Pringle. "You haven't seen it, have you?"

"No," said the Ancient Mariner, and Hiram, the Pieman and the Canner all said no.

Suddenly Pearl gave a shout, and cried, pointing at the big corn-shock,

"Why, see, there's the giant pumpkin, now."

All eyes were turned in that direction, and, sure enough, peeping from beneath the shock was the great golden pumpkin that had rolled away from Joe and defied everyone's efforts to find it. The boy leaped forward, brushed the corn husks back and, with the help of some of the other lads, rolled

the beautiful pumpkin into the midst of the group.

"Hurrah!" cried Joe, taking out his knife and opening the sharpest blade, "now I shall have a Jack-o'lantern that will *be* a Jack-o'lantern."

While Joe's knife dug merrily at the thick shell of the big pumpkin, everyone chattered of how strange it was that the vegetable had been under the corn-shock all this time without having been found.

"I'm sure Joe looked everywhere," said Pearl, "but I found it without any bother at all."

The Ancient Mariner said nothing, but he felt that the Corn Dodger must at that moment be hopping with anger at having carelessly exposed the pumpkin from beneath its hiding place. Sure enough, as he glanced around toward the corn-shock, there was the Dodger himself, hiding behind it, and leaping up and down, mad clear through. As he caught the Ancient Mariner's eye, he beckoned to him, and the old man approached the corn-shock.

"Make the boy wish for a change," he whispered. "Make him do it. I've got the spell on him."

"I'll try," said the Ancient Mariner, and returned to where Joe was sitting on the ground, carving at the big pumpkin.

"My," said the Ancient Mariner, "that pumpkin cuts hard."

"Yes, sir," replied, Joe, grunting, "it does. It's a big one, sure enough."

"If you was a little ant, now," said the Ancient Mariner, "or a beetle, you might eat your way through the shell in less than no time. Don't you wish you were?"

"No," said Joe, "I don't."

Hiram, the Pie-
man



and the Canner, overhearing the Ancient Mariner's attempt to make Joe wish for a change, remembered their duty, and came forward.

"I know what he wishes he was," said the Pieman. "He wishes he was a great big sharp knife. Then he could cut the pumpkin like anything."

"No, I don't wish I was a knife at all," said Joe, displeased at being bothered by such silly remarks.

So the Canner took a hand.

"Of course the boy doesn't wish anything like that," he said. "I know just what he does wish, though. He wishes that he was a cute little mouse, so that he could chew a hole right through the pumpkin. Don't you, Joe?"

Before Joe could answer, Hiram stepped forward, and said:

"I know. He wishes that he was an elephant, so he could step on the pumpkin and smash it to bits."

The Ancient Mariner looked at Hiram with a glance that frightened the poor boy so that he slunk back in the crowd. Then the old

man looked at Joe, as though afraid that he might take Hiram's hint and wish to be an elephant. But Joe was cutting away at the pumpkin shell and paying no attention to anything else, and the Ancient Mariner sighed with relief.

"Just imagine," he said to the Pieman, "just imagine, Mr. Cookey, if he had wished to be turned into an elephant. Wouldn't that be a nice thing for me to have to take back to Davy Jones?"

And the Pieman was so glad to think that Joe had not taken Hiram's hint that he forgot to correct the Ancient Mariner about his name.

By this time Joe had so far completed his great Jack-o'lantern that the face now needed only one eye. But the minutes were flying; the Schoolmaster and Farmer Pringle were eager to have the parade over, and the Corn Dodger was dancing up and down behind his house, telling the Ancient Mariner, in loud whispers, to "Make the boy wish." It was but one minute of midnight!

"Hurry, Joe, please hurry," said Pearl, "or they will go without you."

"Yes, Pearl," replied Joe, "I am, just as fast as ever I can. I've only got an eye to make, and here goes for it."

Clutching his knife with renewed strength, Joe plunged it into the side of the big pumpkin. There was a dull sound as of something cracking, and the pumpkin was smashed into a dozen pieces, its golden depths, with the clusters of seeds, shining in the moonlight like real gold.

There was a cry of dismay from Joe, an echo of disappointment from everyone else, and the voice of the Corn Dodger was raised above all other sounds, sobbing,

"Pumpkin-head! Pumpkin-head!"

Not knowing where the voice came from, but thinking that the word was meant for him Joe Miller looked at the shattered pumpkin, then around at the open-mouthed crowd, and cried,



"Pumpkin-head! That's just what I wish I was!"

The earth shook, and out of it rose a mammoth pumpkin vine, its enormous tendrils grasping at the air. They caught Joe, and before anyone could rush to his aid, had dragged him down through the ground, kicking and screaming. In another moment the earth trembled again, the vines opened their great leaves, and there, sprawled on his back, was a curious person. He caught Pearl by the hand before she could draw away and helped himself to his feet, crying,

"Why, what's the matter? Where am I?"

All stood gazing at the creature in silent astonishment.

It was Joe's voice that they heard, but it was not Joe that they saw. Instead, the creature was almost too queer to describe. His head was a Jack-o'lantern, like one that Joe might have made; his body was a larger pumpkin, as big as the one that Joe had just smashed, and his arms and legs were made of pumpkin vines and leaves. On his face was a broad grin, and the light shone brightly through the holes cut for eyes, nose, and mouth.

As he turned toward Pearl, the little girl drew away in alarm.

"Don't touch me," she cried.

"Why not?" demanded the creature, and this time the voice was surely Joe Miller's. "Don't you like me any more just because I broke the big pumpkin?"

At this Farmer Pringle stepped forward.

"Do you mean to tell me," he demanded, "that you call yourself Joe Miller?"

The creature turned its beaming face toward Pearl's father, and asked, in surprise,

"Why, yes, Uncle, why not?"

Farmer Pringle took one of the bits of broken mirror that the girls had brought for trying a charm and gave it to the strange creature which held it before its face. It saw itself in the glass, and cried,

"Goodness gracious! I wished myself a pumpkin-head, and now I am one."





“Don’t touch me,” she cried.

It turned, and would have run away, had not the Pieman and the Ancient Mariner caught it by the arms.

"Wait," cried the Pieman, "If you are really Joe Miller, you can tell us something."

"Yes," shouted the Ancient Mariner. "How do you make pumpkins grow where others have failed?"

"That's easy," said the creature. "First, you take a pumpkin, and then—and then—"

"Yes, yes?" whispered the Ancient Mariner, "heave ahead, my hearty. And then——"

But the creature had stopped, and was plainly trying to recall something it had forgotten. It raised one of its leafy hands to its forehead, looked about helplessly, and cried, "I don't know."

"What?" shouted the Corn Dodger, rushing out from behind the big shock, and causing commotion by his appearance, "do you mean that you have forgotten?"

"Yes," said the creature, "I've forgotten. I wished I could be a pumpkin-head, and that's just what I am. I've forgotten all about it."

"I'll never dare go back to Davy Jones and the Pirates," moaned the Ancient Mariner.

“And what will I do for pumpkins?” cried the Pieman.

They fell into each other's arms and wept, while the Corn Dodger danced up and down in rage, so that his husks rustled and the kernels of corn that made up his body rattled.

As for Pearl, and her father and mother and all the others—well, suppose you had been there, don't you think you would have been too astonished to say or do anything?





CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN WISHES COME TRUE.

P

EARL was the first to come to her senses. Turning to the Ancient Mariner, she cried,

“You wicked old man! You did this!”

“Why, Miss,” said that old villain, trying to appear very innocent, “I never touched the

boy. I'll leave it to my friend, Mr. Pastry."

"Doe, not Pastry," said the Pieman. "Otherwise what you say is right. You never touched Joe."

"Just the same," persisted the little girl, "I saw you with your heads together, and that Canner man, too, and I told Joe to watch out for you. Oh, papa, aren't you going to make them turn Joe back into himself again?"

But Farmer Pringle was too busy trying to catch the Corn Dodger to hear Pearl. The Sprite had attempted to make his escape as soon as he saw so many people looking at him, and would have succeeded had not the Canner and Pearl's father caught him by the legs just as he dove into the bottom of the big corn-shock. The Corn Dodger struggled, for although he was a fairy his power would be gone once he was captured. Besides, he feared the Canner more than anything in the world.

But Farmer Pringle and the Canner pulled hard and soon had the Dodger on the ground, where the Schoolmaster and Johnny Farnum, the fat boy, sat on him.

"Ancient, Ancient!" cried the Corn Dodger, "help me. I helped you. Don't let them can me."

But the Ancient Mariner turned his back on the Corn Dodger, who soon saw that he was helpless and stopped struggling.

"So you are the Corn Dodger of whom I have heard so much?" asked Farmer Pringle. "And it's you who have played this trick on my little nephew."

"The Ancient Mariner asked me to," pleaded the Sprite.

"That's no excuse," said Farmer Pringle. "You must undo your evil work. Will you, if I let you go?"

"I can't," said the Dodger. "I am powerless to work charms on mortals except for the five minutes just before midnight. It's too late."

"Leave him to me," suggested the Canner. "I think I can handle him."

Now, the Canner did not mean what they thought he did. He did not care what became of Joe, but he wanted the Corn Dodger all for himself. The Sprite knew this, and cried,



“Don’t let him can me, don’t. I’ll tell all.”

On Farmer Pringle promising to see that no harm came to him, the Corn Dodger told him all about how the Ancient Mariner, the Pieman, the Canner, and Hiram Hubbard had come to him with their plot against Joe Miller, and how he had cast a spell over the boy that had changed him into a pumpkin-head.

Luckily for the Ancient Mariner and his wicked friends, every one was too eager to rescue Joe from the fix in which he found himself to pay any attention to them just then. Otherwise, I don’t know what would have happened to them.

As for poor Joe himself, he sat on the ground, with Mrs. Pringle’s arm around his fat, vegetable neck, and Pearl holding his leaf-like hands, and all three crying. That is, Pearl and her mother cried, and Joe sounded as though he were sobbing, but no tears came.

For a pumpkin, no matter how lifelike it might look, was never known to shed real tears.

You need hardly be told that Joe was frightened at the strange change that had come over him, but he listened to the Corn Dodger's explanation with interest, and at the end of it jumped up.

"So the Corn Dodger cast a spell over me, did he?" cried Joe. "And that was what made me turn into what I am. But it didn't happen till I wished."

Pearl saw Joe's meaning and cried,

"Of course, and it's just as simple. Now, Joe, you just make another wish and you'll be all right."

"What shall I wish I was?"

"Why, Joe Miller of course. How stupid!"

"Wouldn't you rather have me a beautiful prince?"

"No, I just want Joe Miller back again."

So Joe wished as hard as he could. He tried it several times, in many different ways, but there was no change. He still remained a pumpkin-head.

"I guess it's no use," he said, smiling in spite of his disappointment. "I'll just have to be a pumpkin-head all the rest of my life."

It was now away past midnight. Most of the children, who had been kept awake by the excitement, were unable to hold their eyes open another moment, and, one by one, they were falling asleep in their mothers' arms. Even Pearl found it difficult to stay awake. Farmer Pringle believed what the Corn Dodger had said about his not being able to restore Joe to his own form until the next night, and made up his mind that there was nothing to do but wait till then. Anyway, it was no use for them to stay in the cornfield any longer, so he gave the word and all started for home.

Farmer Pringle, leading Joe, to whose hand little Pearl clung sleepily, went first, and then came the Schoolmaster and some of the larger boys, with the Corn Dodger as their prisoner. Right behind him walked the Canner, keeping close watch on the Dodger, and muttering over and over,



“ Fifty cans of corn at a dollar a can. And such pop-corn ! ”

The grown people, with their sleepy children, followed. As for Hiram, the Ancient Mariner and the Pieman, they had slunk away some time



before—the Ancient Mariner to spend the rest of the night with the Pieman in his bake-shop, and Hiram to his room in the Pringle barn.

Thus the little procession that had started out so joyously only a short while since, returned to the farmhouse. The villagers scattered to their homes, Mrs. Pringle put Pearl to bed, and Joe, with Farmer Pringle and the Schoolmaster, went into the dining-room to talk it all over.

Some boys would have been so frightened

and unhappy that they would have cried, but by this time Joe Miller was laughing at the fun of the thing, especially when he saw his round, shining figure in the big mirror.

“Ho, ho, ho!” he shouted. “I’m a sight. If there was only a circus here I could go in the side show as the real Pumpkin-headed boy! Step up, ladies and gentlemen, and have a look. Only ten cents.”





CHAPTER IX.

THE NEXT DAY.

BEFORE sitting down with Joe and the Schoolmaster, Farmer Pringle locked the Corn Dodger in the hall closet and put the key on the hook over the door. Much to his surprise, the Dodger did not complain

about being locked in for the night. But the captured Sprite of the cornfield probably thought that he was better off in the closet than outdoors where the Canner could get at him. He clung to the little can-opener that he always carried, and jumped at every sound, fearing that it was his enemy come to cut him up and can him.

Farmer Pringle, however, did not wish the wicked rascal to spend the night too comfortably after all the trouble he had caused, so he said, after he had locked the door, loudly enough for the Dodger to hear him,

"I think he'll be safe in there, if the mice don't find he's about."

Hearing this, the Dodger pounded on the door and begged to be released, but Farmer Pringle paid no attention to him.

Though the Schoolmaster was a very wise man, he could not hit on any way to get Joe out of his trouble. Neither could Farmer Pringle. As for Joe himself, all he could think of was to try to wish himself back where he had been. But the plan did not work, and though they sat up all night long

Joe was as much of a pumpkin in the morning as ever.

Pearl and her mother came down to breakfast, and everyone managed to eat heartily except Joe, who only drank water.

After breakfast, very much to everyone's surprise (though, when they came to think of it, quite natural for a pumpkin), Joe could not control his desire to go out on the lawn and lie down in the bright sunshine.

"It feels so good," he said, "just as though I was growing."

He looked so comfortable that little Pearl, sorry as she felt for her cousin, could not help smiling, till a thought struck her.

Why did pumpkins like the sunlight? Because it ripened them.

Mercy! What if Joe should get ripe and burst! So she hurried to get an umbrella to put over him, to keep at least some of the sun off. And in this way the boy spent the day, waiting for night to come, so that the Corn Dodger could again cast a spell over him and let him wish himself back to his own shape.

But what of the Pieman and the Ancient Mariner? Very busy were they in the back room of the bake-shop, where they had spent the night.

"I tell you," said the Mariner, after a long, long talk, "I'm going to have that pumpkin boy under the sea and down in Davy Jones' locker, whether the Corn Dodger is scared into changing him back as he was or not. Davy and those Pirates are people you don't know, Mr. Jelly-rolls!"

"Doe," said the Pieman—"D-O-E."

"If you ever met 'em," the Mariner went on,





“What if Joe should get ripe and burst! Mercy!”

“you’d know they wasn’t to be trifled with. I’m surprised I haven’t heard from them already, but I will by to-night, as sure as the bottom of the sea is sandy. And when I do hear from them it doesn’t take my glittering eye long to tell me that there’ll be a storm. That’s what, Mr. Gingerbread!”

“Doe,” said the Pieman, weakly. “Please get my name right. But if you expect trouble from this Mr. Jones—and I notice you don’t have any bother remembering *his* name—what do you think of me? The villagers won’t have anything to do with me again, though goodness knows whatever I’ve done was only because I was so anxious to get pumpkins to make pies for them. What’s to become of me?”

“Come down to Davy’s locker with me,” said the Ancient Mariner. “I have a plan, which is this. If we can keep the Dodger from turning Joe Miller back into a boy again, we can capture Joe, somehow, and take him down to Davy. Once there, he’ll remember his secret for making pumpkins grow, I guess, and if he doesn’t we’ve got



him anyway, and he'll make a few mighty fine pies, himself. You'll come in quite handy, because I don't believe Davy could cook a

F pumpkin pie to suit those Pirates. What do you say?"

"But I'm no fish—I couldn't live under the water," said the Pieman.

"Leave that to me."

At this moment there came a knock on the window of the bake-shop, and Hiram Hubbard's face was pressed against the pane. The Pieman opened the window, and Hiram jumped into the room. He was very much excited.

"He—he's out there, hiding behind a barrel," said Hiram.

"Who?" asked the Pieman.

"The Corn Dodger," said Hiram. "He escaped from the closet they locked him in."

Without waiting to hear any more, the Ancient Mariner ran to the window and called,

“Ahoy, there, Dodger!” At this, the Corn Dodger himself appeared, peeping over an apple barrel that stood outside. When he saw the Ancient Mariner he hurried to the window and was helped over the sill, into the room, where he told them his adventures since they had seen him the night before.

On finding himself locked up in the closet he had looked about for means of escape, because Farmer Pringle’s remark about mice had frightened him terribly. With his can-opener he had managed to pick the lock and then he had stolen out at the front door, which was open, and gone to the barn. There he had found Hiram, who had taken him to the Pie-man and the Ancient Mariner.

“You won’t let them get me?” he pleaded, when he had finished his story. The Pie-man said that they would protect the Dodger, but the crafty old Ancient Mariner fixed his glittering eye on the frightened Sprite, and said,

“I don’t know about that. If I was to send word to the Canner that you were here he’d be quite pleased, eh?”

The Corn Dodger fell to his knees and begged the Mariner not to be so cruel.

"Well," said the old man, "it all depends on how you behave. Are you going to change that Joe Miller into a boy to-night?"

"If I don't they'll give me to the Canner," cried the Dodger.

"And if you do *I'll* give you to the Canner," said the Ancient Mariner. "But you won't. You'll do as I say."

Then he explained to the Dodger how he and the Pieman had decided to take Joe, in his pumpkin form, to Davy Jones' locker.

"When they go to the cornfield to-night for the spell," he added, "you meet them and pretend to be all ready to do what they want. Then you step aside and leave the rest to me."

"But in the meantime, what's to become of me?" cried the Dodger.

"And of me?" cried Hiram. "They'll just about kill me if they find I brought the Dodger here instead of telling him he escaped."

"Both of you hide here till night," said the

Ancient Mariner, "while I cruise around and see how the land lies."

With which he picked up his crossbow and his albatross, and went out. The Pieman, the Corn Dodger and Hiram watched him stumping up the hill toward the Pringle farm, singing a sea song, and now and then looking back with his glittering eye, to see that they were not following him.





CHAPTER X.

THE MAGIC SPRING.

IF Pearl asked Joe once, she asked him fifty times during the day,

“You don’t feel any riper, do you, Joey?”

And each time the boy smiled good-naturedly, and told his little cousin not to

worry. But she could not help being alarmed when he left the lawn during the afternoon and went out to the pumpkin patch. Here he lay on the ground among the vines that had caused him so much trouble the night before, and buried his hands in the earth, so that he looked for all the world just like a great pumpkin, vine and all.

"But," said Joe, merrily, "if I am a pumpkin, I must act like a pumpkin, mustn't I? If I were a balloon, now, you wouldn't be surprised if I wanted to float away in the air, would you?"

"No," said Pearl, "but I don't like to see you lying there as though you were growing and getting ready to be picked, you know. It makes me awfully creepy. You—don't feel as though you were getting dry or going to seed do you?"

"No, no," laughed Joe. "You mustn't fret so, Pearl. Remember, the Dodger will fix me all right again to-night, and if he doesn't, see, I still have the sea-shell that Mother Carey gave me. Perhaps, if I blow on that she might help me."

He tried to blow on the sea-shell, which, in some mysterious manner, he still retained, strung on a silken cord about his neck, but his mouth, you must remember, was only a slit in an empty pumpkin shell, and he could not frame his lips around the mouth-piece of the talisman.

“Mother Carey couldn’t do me any good, anyway,” he said, “because I’m not under the sea, so what if I can’t blow on the shell? If you don’t feel too tired, though, I’d like another drink of water, for I never was so thirsty.”

Pearl ran to the house to get Joe the water, but returned out of breath with the news of the Corn Dodger’s escape.

For the first time since his change Joe was alarmed. He hurried to the farmhouse where he found Farmer Pringle and the Schoolmaster examining the door of the closet and wondering how the Dodger had opened it. The broken lock showed them. The farm hands and many of the villagers were sent helter-skelter for the Corn Dodger, for Farmer Pringle realized that without him Joe would always have to be a pumpkin.

Pearl was too unhappy for words as the searchers returned with no news of the Dodger. The Canner had been watching the cornfield all night and all day, thinking that the Sprite might escape and try to get back to his cornshock, so they knew that the Dodger was not there. Hiram was not about, but nobody imagined that he could help much, anyway. All was excitement and all pitied poor Joe.

Matters were in this state when the Ancient Mariner, singing a sea song and carrying his crossbow and the Albatross, hove in sight. On being told of the Corn Dodger's escape, he laughed.



"Ho, ho!" he chuckled, "Don't let that alarm you, my hearties. My glittering eye simply winks at that."

"But," said Farmer Pringle, coolly, for he did not like the Ancient Mariner very much, feeling that he was to blame for everything, "if we don't find the Corn Dodger what's to be done?"

"Done?" repeated the Ancient Mariner, "Why, wait. The Dodger wouldn't be likely to go to the cornfield now, in broad daylight, would he? But he will to-night. And why, asks you? Because he has to. If he stayed away one night what do you think would happen? Why, he'd lose his power forever, that's what. So I says, just wait.

"But there's one thing you may have noticed. That Dodger isn't so great, after all, is he? To be sure, he cast the spell over Joe that made him change to a pumpkin-head, but he couldn't change him back right away, could he?"

"No," said Farmer Pringle, "that's so."

"I don't call that being much of a fairy," sniffed the Ancient Mariner. "Now, what I want to say is this. I'm a little sorry for what I did last night, and I want to help straighten

things out. So if you'll leave it to me to-night maybe I'll be able to do as much as the Dodger can. What say you?"

The old man seemed so sincere in what he said that Farmer Pringle believed him.

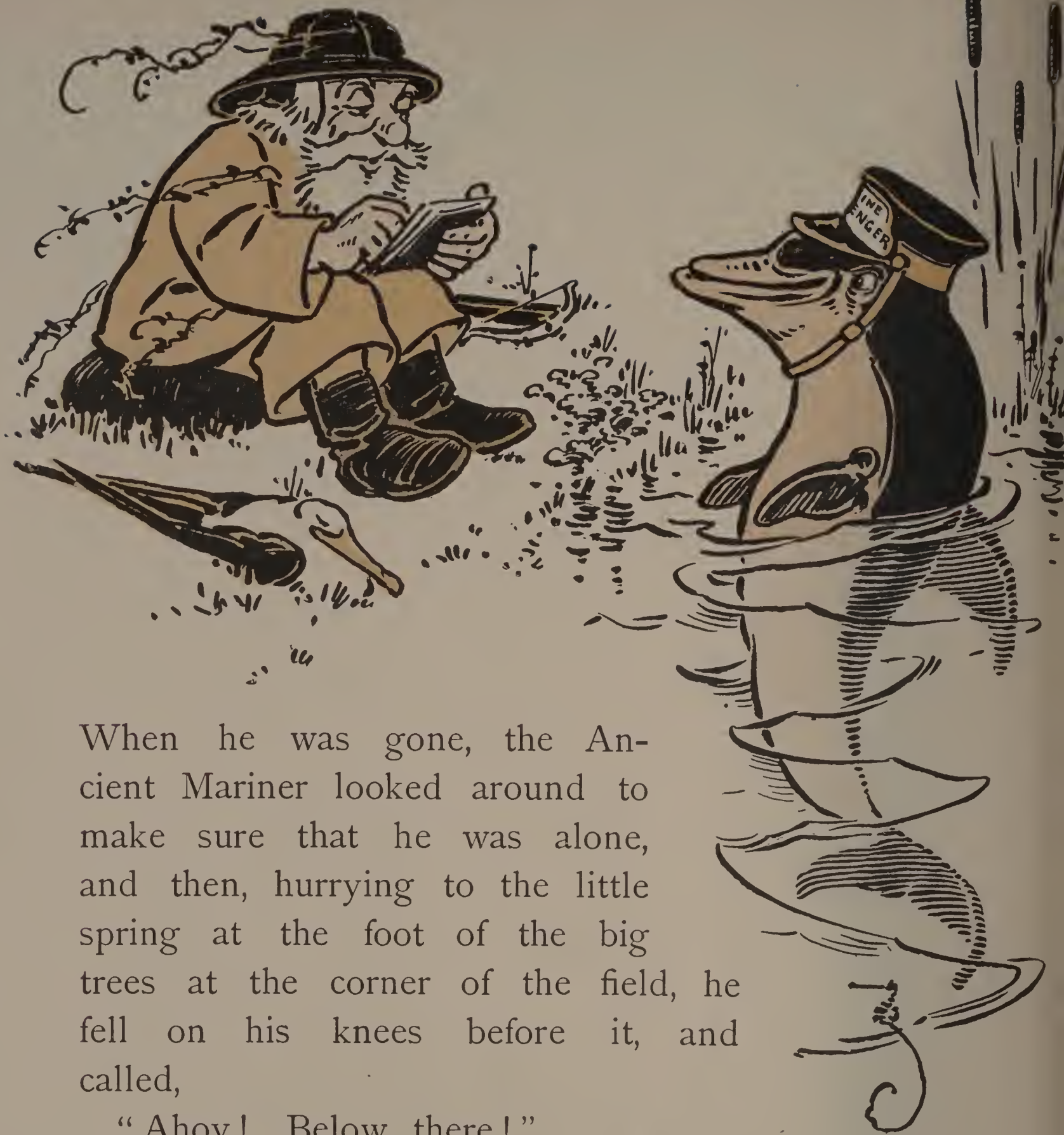
"You want your little cousin back again, don't you?" said the Mariner to Pearl.

"Yes, thank you, sir," said Pearl. So her father told the Ancient Mariner that they would leave matters to him.

"Then meet me in the cornfield, right where we were last night," said the Mariner, "a few minutes before midnight. You, Farmer Pringle, and Mrs. Pringle, and the Schoolmaster, and Pearl, and, of course, Joe, and anyone else you like. The Dodger will be there."

With his crossbow under one arm and the Albatross dangling from the other, the Ancient Mariner left the Pringles and went off toward the cornfield, still singing his sea song.

In the cornfield, guarding the big corn-shock as a cat guards a mouse hole, he found the Canner. What the Ancient Mariner said to him I don't know, but the Canner rose from the ground and went toward the village.



When he was gone, the Ancient Mariner looked around to make sure that he was alone, and then, hurrying to the little spring at the foot of the big trees at the corner of the field, he fell on his knees before it, and called,

“Ahoy! Below there!”

There was a commotion in the water, and a dolphin, wearing a messenger boy's cap, stuck its glistening nose above the surface. In its mouth it held a note-book and pencil, which the Ancient Mariner took. With

the pencil the old man hastily scribbled a message in the book and handed it back to the dolphin, which disappeared, touching its hat with the tip of its flipper.

"To Davy Jones, as quick as you can swim," said the Ancient Mariner.

The note that he had sent in this mysterious manner was very short. It said:

"EXPECT ME WITH THE PUMPKIN-PIE BOY AT MID-NIGHT. TELL THE PIRATES.

P. S. ALSO MAKE UP AN EXTRA BUNK FOR A GENTLEMAN NAMED JOHN PIE.

ANCIENT MARINER."

In a few minutes more, the old man was back in the bake-shop with the Corn Dodger, Hiram, and the Pieman. They asked him where he had been, but he only winked.

No lanterns were needed to show Farmer Pringle and Joe's friends the way to the corn-field, that night. The light from within Joe's pumpkin head shone like the head-light of an automobile, and made the path as bright as day.

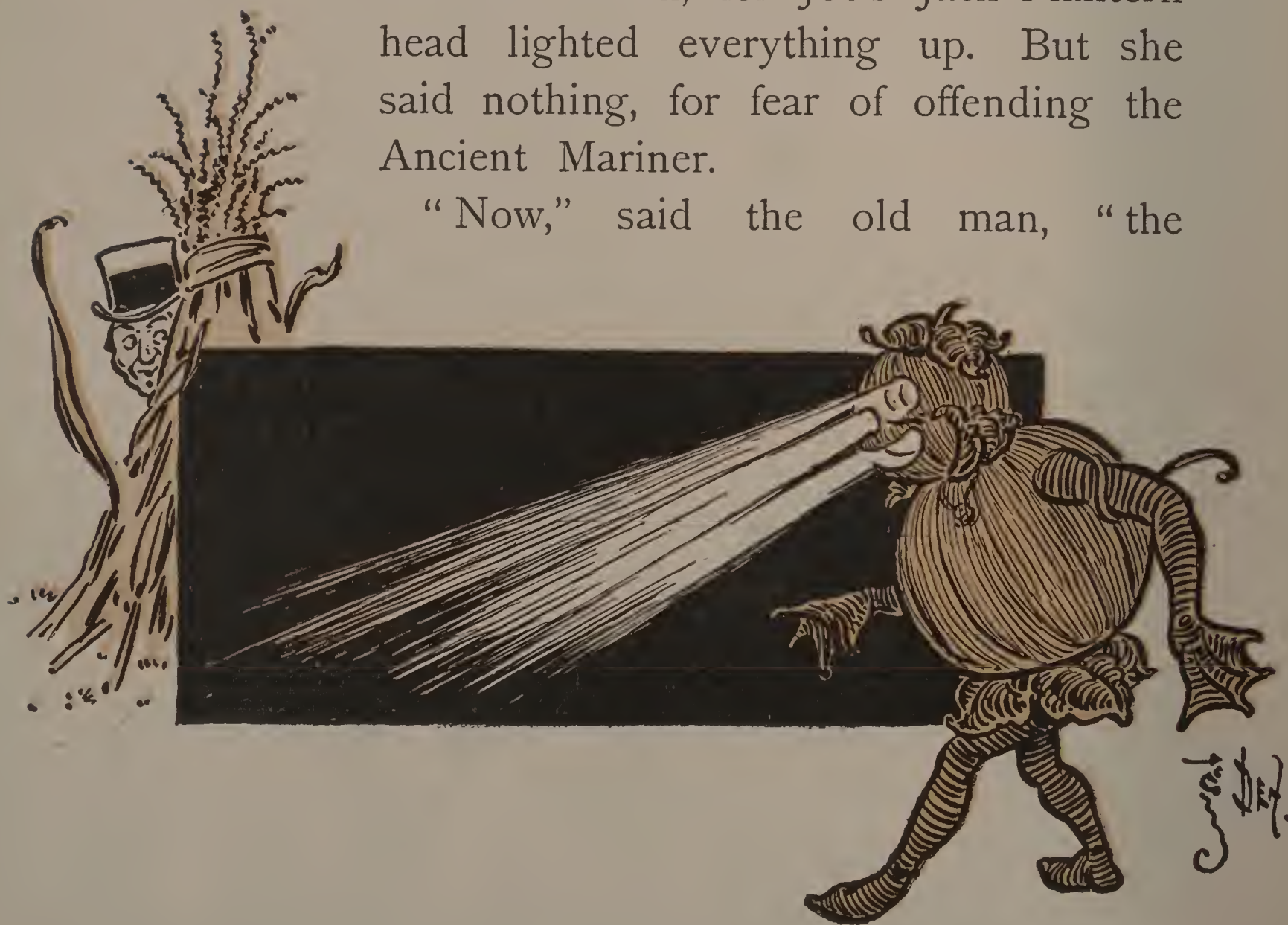
The Ancient Mariner was awaiting them. With him were the Pieman and Hiram Hub-

bard, and concealed behind a corn-shock was the Corn Dodger. Behind another shock was the Canner. The Dodger did not know this, or he would not have been comfortable, although he still had his faithful can-opener.

"Ahoy!" called the Ancient Mariner through the darkness, as Joe approached him, followed by Pearl, her father and mother, the Schoolmaster and some of the villagers. "My glittering eye tells me that you are here."

Pearl thought that it would have been a pretty poor glittering eye that could not have told this much, for Joe's Jack-o'-lantern head lighted everything up. But she said nothing, for fear of offending the Ancient Mariner.

"Now," said the old man, "the



time's come to change this poor boy back to what he was, that is if he wants to change."

"Indeed, I do!" exclaimed Joe. "I'm tired of being a pumpkin."

"Then," said the Ancient Mariner, "listen to what I say. The Dodger, who is with us, as I said he would be, is a little shaky on his spells this evening, and I'm afraid he won't be much help. But don't be afraid. Little Miss Pearl is going to do the trick."

"Oh, Joe, hear that!" exclaimed Pearl, delightedly. "The Ancient Mariner says that I'm to be the one to change you back to a boy. Please, Mr. Mariner, hurry, I'm so anxious to begin."

"Plenty of time," said the old villain. "You may not know it, but this spring here is a magic spring, and it's through this that everything's going to happen. Dodger!"

The Corn Dodger, looking about to see that the Canner was not near, stepped out from behind the corn-shock.

"Dodger," said the Ancient Mariner, "You stand by the side of the spring, here. Pumpkin

boy, you stand here, and little Miss Pearl, you kneel down and look into the spring."

The Dodger, Joe and Pearl took their places as directed, and the Ancient Mariner went on,

"Everyone else, stand a little back, so as not to keep the charm from working."

All did as they were told, but the Canner crept to a corn-shock nearer to where the Dodger stood, and whispered to the Ancient Mariner,

"Now?"

"Not yet," whispered the Mariner to



him. Then he said, in a solemn voice, standing directly behind Pearl, who was looking intently into the spring and wondering what there was in it so magical,

“Hokey, pokey, mokey mo!
Iggery, piggery, down you go!”

As he said the last words, the Ancient Mariner gave a loud shout, which so frightened Pearl that she lost her balance and fell head first into the spring, the water of which closed over her. Joe, in alarm at what had happened to his little cousin, forgot all about himself, and, intent only on saving her, jumped in after Pearl; and the Ancient Mariner, clasping the Pieman by the hand, leaped after both, shouting,

“All aboard for Davy Jones’ locker!”

As the water closed over the top of the Pieman’s hat, the ground about the spring closed in, and by the time Farmer Pringle and the rest had reached the spot there was no sign that there had ever had been any water there. As for the Corn Dodger, he tried to follow the Ancient Mariner, but was

not quick enough, and the closing ground caught him about the knees, in which position the Canner easily captured him, and rushed off with the poor fellow under his arm, the Dodger kicking and screaming.

Pearl's father and mother, the Schoolmaster and the rest stood gazing at the ground stupidly, wondering if they were dreaming.





CHAPTER XI.

DAVY JONES' LOCKER.

A WAY down at the bottom of the sea, far deeper than the longest fishing-line could ever reach, at the edge of a forest of seaweed and hard by the Caves of Coral, stood (and for all I know stands

yet), a funny little house. Once it had been a ship, but now there were no masts or sails, and the windows and doors cut in the sides showed that it was a dwelling.

In front of the house was a little garden filled with the brightest flowers, and bordered with sea-shells. A strange light from somewhere made everything as brilliant as when the sun shines in your own land, so that the thousands of fish, of all sizes, that swam in and out, overhead and round about, glistened and shimmered and were prettier to look at than any birds or butterflies that ever flew in your garden. You would have said, had you found yourself there, "This must be Fairyland."

But it was not quite Fairyland, as the sign over the front door of the little house would have told you. This sign was made of a piece of old timber, and the letters were shells. They spelled:

DAVY JONES' LOCKER"

Board & Lodging at
Reasonable Rates

The house must have been full, for the roof seemed to shake with the sound of voices within. They were gruff, loud, rumbling voices, that set the little fish scampering off among the Coral Caves as they heard them. And all that could be heard was one word,

“DINNER!”

But this was shouted over and over again, with a rattling and banging that sounded like tin cups, plates, knives and forks being thumped and pounded.

Suddenly, while the tumult was at its height, a little old man, with his hair braided behind his head in a pigtail, tumbled out through the door and stood trembling in the sandy path.

“Dear me, dear me!” he muttered, as he wrung his hands, “these Pirates are getting worse and worse. They had breakfast only two hours ago, and now they’re shouting for dinner!”

The voices rose louder and louder, and the tins were banged more fiercely than ever. The little old man grew more and more frightened. He called in at the open door,

“Very well, gentlemen, you shall have dinner.



دینر!

Only do be calm." Then he blew a bos'un's whistle that he wore on a string about his neck, and an untidy looking mermaid appeared from behind the house, her sleeves rolled up and a frying-pan in her hand.

"What is it, Misther Jones?" she said.

"Bridget," replied Davy Jones, for it was he, "I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to hurry dinner a little. My boarders——"

"Hurry dinner, is it?" cried Bridget, "and that I'll not. It's cook, cook, cook, for thim Pie-rats till I'm tired out. I'll l'ave in the mornin'."

With this she switched her tail, knocking over several flower-pots that stood in the garden beside the house.

"O, goodness, Bridget, do be more careful," cried poor Davy. "You've knocked over my pots."

"Much harm that is," sniffed the angry Bridget. "What's in thim? Punkins, I suppose!"

"'Sh, Bridget, they may hear you," said Davy, casting a frightened glance toward the house, from which the shouts of "Dinner" still came. "Yes, these are my attempts to raise



“'Sh, Bridget,
they may hear you.”

pumpkins, for my boarders still cry for pumpkin pies, and as I don't hear from the Ancient Mariner I don't know what is going to happen to me."

"Poor Misther Jones!" said Bridget, seeing how unhappy her master was. "And can't you get any pumpkins any other way except from the Ancient Mariner?"

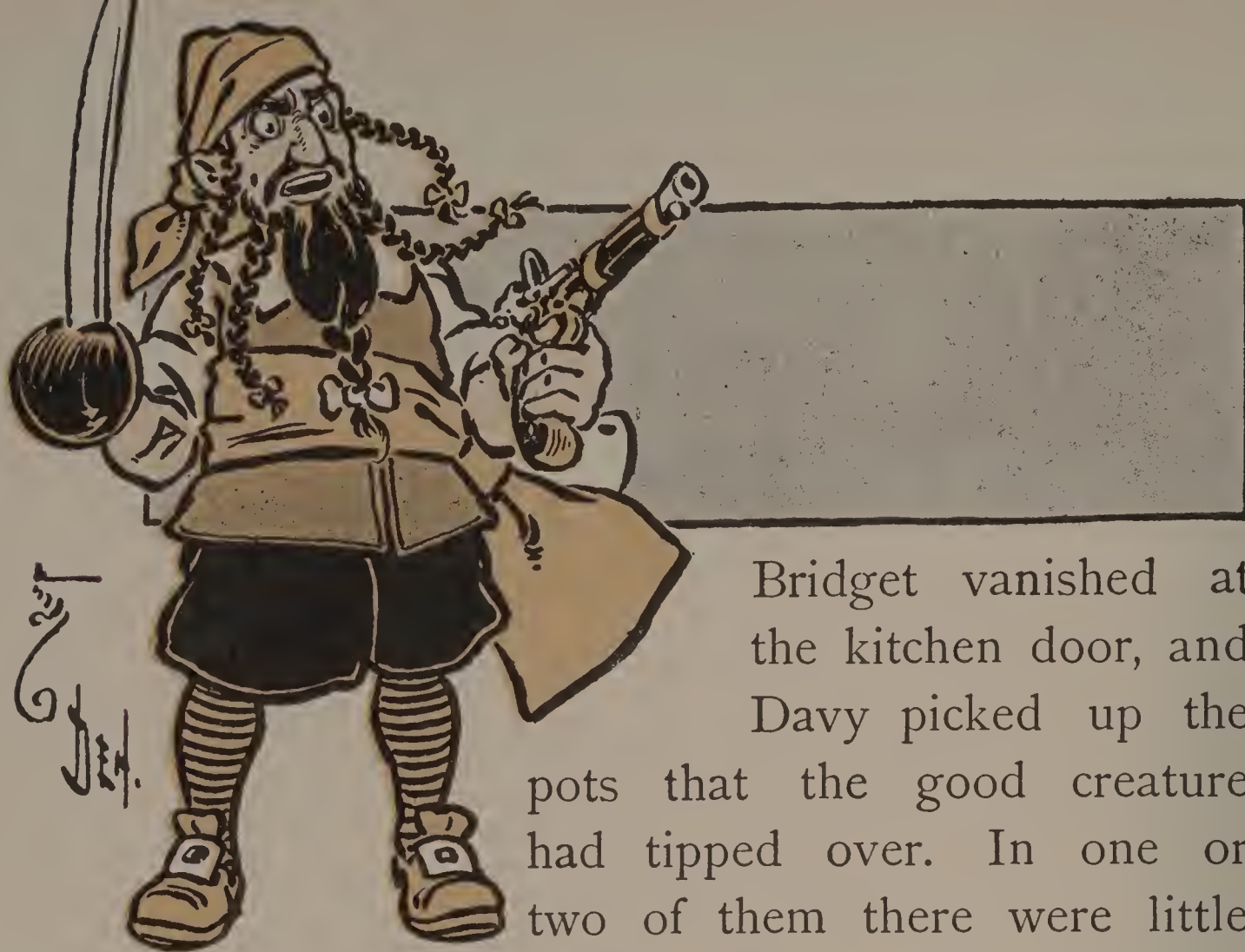
"No," said Davy. "And I don't know when he's coming back. He should have been here last night. Oh, it's dreadful. Hear them."

Indeed, Bridget did not have to listen very sharply to hear the Pirates. For now their voices were so loud that the sea trembled, and some oysters near by turned over in their beds, wondering at the clamor.

Bridget shook her frying-pan at the house.

"Ye villains!" she shouted. "I'll cook your dinner, but not because I wouldn't rather see you all starve. It's for you, Misther Jones," she added, "I'll hurry it along. What shall I make for dessert?"

"Never mind the dessert, Bridget. They eat no sweets but pumpkin pies. Oh, how I wish the Ancient Mariner would hurry back."



Bridget vanished at the kitchen door, and Davy picked up the pots that the good creature had tipped over. In one or two of them there were little sprouts; the rest contained nothing. Davy looked fondly at the sprouts.

“If you’d only grow,” he murmured. “But I’m afraid I’ll never raise a good pumpkin under the sea. Oh, where’s the Ancient Mariner?”

The next moment footsteps were heard, and from the house came pell-mell a dozen or more of the most savage looking persons you could imagine. Some of them wore great belts in which were stuck pistols and knives, others carried their weapons in their teeth; some had long, black beards, others red; most of them wore their hair in pigtails, and the costume of each was fantastic as anything could be. The leader was the most dreadful of all in appearance, with

a beard the color of a crow, a red cap on his head, and a big cutlass in his hand. Behind him stood a tall, one-legged man, on whose shoulder perched a great green parrot, that looked very wise, and kept saying,

“Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!” whatever that might mean!

The leader, seeing Davy, shouted,

“Where’s our dinner, and what are we going to have?”

“Gently, gentlemen,” said Davy, “Bridget is getting it as fast as she can. You are going to have corned beef, and cabbage, and boiled potatoes, and ——” he stopped.

“And what else?” de-



manded the leader, whose name was Blackbeard.

"Nothing else to-day," said Davy, weakly.

"Nothing else!" roared Blackbeard. "Didn't we tell you we wanted something else, and wanted it to-day? Mates," he cried, turning to the other Pirates, "what is it we've been telling Davy we wanted, right along? Speak up!"

"Pumpkin Pie!" shouted the other Pirates in chorus, and the parrot screamed,

"Pie! Pie! Pumpkin Pie! Pieces of eight!"

Poor Davy trembled, the Pirates looked so fierce, and I don't know what he would have answered; but Bridget, hearing the tumult, ran out from the kitchen and faced the mob.

"Shame on ye," she cried. "What do ye mean by pestering the good man so? Isn't he doing the best he can for you, you hungry, lazy crew? Go back into the house and take what you get!"

The Pirates were as meek as could be before Bridget, and even the fiery Blackbeard trembled. But they did not go into the house. Instead, one of them, who was better

dressed than the others and wore an eyeglass in one eye, stepped forward and said,

"Oh, Mr. Jones, do not think we mean to harm you. Only we know that the Ancient Mariner should be back by now with his magical secret for making pumpkins grow down here, and we've got our mouths all fixed for the pies. So you must excuse us."

"Thanks, Captain Jinks," said Davy. "Yes, the Mariner ought to be back."

"Then," shouted Bluebeard, growing bold again, as Bridget had returned to her kitchen, "why isn't he?"

"Yes," howled the others, "where is he?"

And the Parrot squeaked, "Where is he? Pieces of Eight!"

"I don't know," Davy said. The result of his answer was worse than he had feared. The Pirates burst into howls and shouts



of anger, waving their swords and shooting off their pistols, while the Parrot screamed loudly.

“He isn’t coming. He didn’t get the secret,” they yelled. “Give us pumpkin pie, or we’ll tear down the house!”

Headed by Blackbeard, they made a rush for Davy’s Locker, and began to dig and cut at the timbers with their swords. Poor Davy was beside himself with fear, but utterly helpless to stop his boarders from destroying the old home that had sheltered him for so many hundred years. He blew on his whistle, and Bridget appeared.

“I’ll call the Swordfish police,” she said, but of course there was not one about—there never is when you want one! The Pirates had ripped the door off its hinges, and were trying to cut a hole through the side of the house, when something happened.

A Dolphin, wearing a messenger-boy’s cap, and holding a message in its mouth, came swimming like a shot down from the waters above. Straight to Davy Jones it swam, and stopped, touching its cap with one of its front flippers.

"A message for me?" asked Davy. The Dolphin bowed, and Davy took the message from his mouth. Tearing it open he read aloud:

"EXPECT ME WITH THE PUMPKIN-PIE BOY AT MIDNIGHT. TELL THE PIRATES.

P. S. ALSO MAKE UP AN EXTRA BUNK FOR A GENTLEMAN NAMED JOHN PIE.

ANCIENT MARINER."

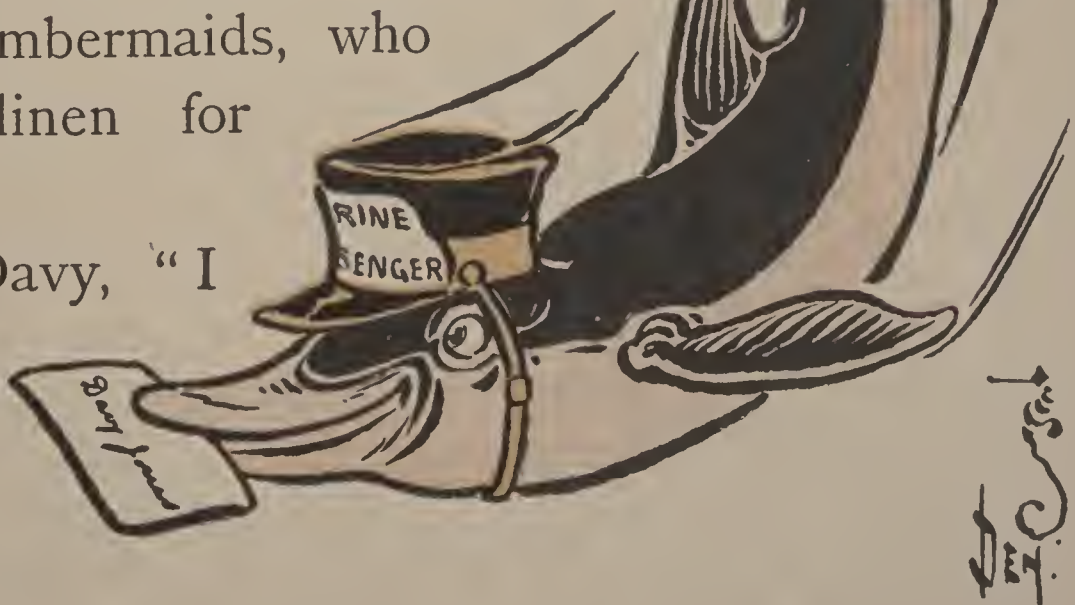
When they heard the message the Pirates stopped destroying the house, and gave a cheer for joy. Then they joined hands and danced around Davy, who was as much excited as they.

"What time is it now?" asked one of them, who wore a skull-and-cross-bones hat, and was called Captain Kidd. "What time is it now?"

Davy looked at his watch.

"Nearly midnight," he said. "They'll soon be here. I must get the place ready." He blew his whistle, summoning the chambermaids, who brought fresh linen for the beds.

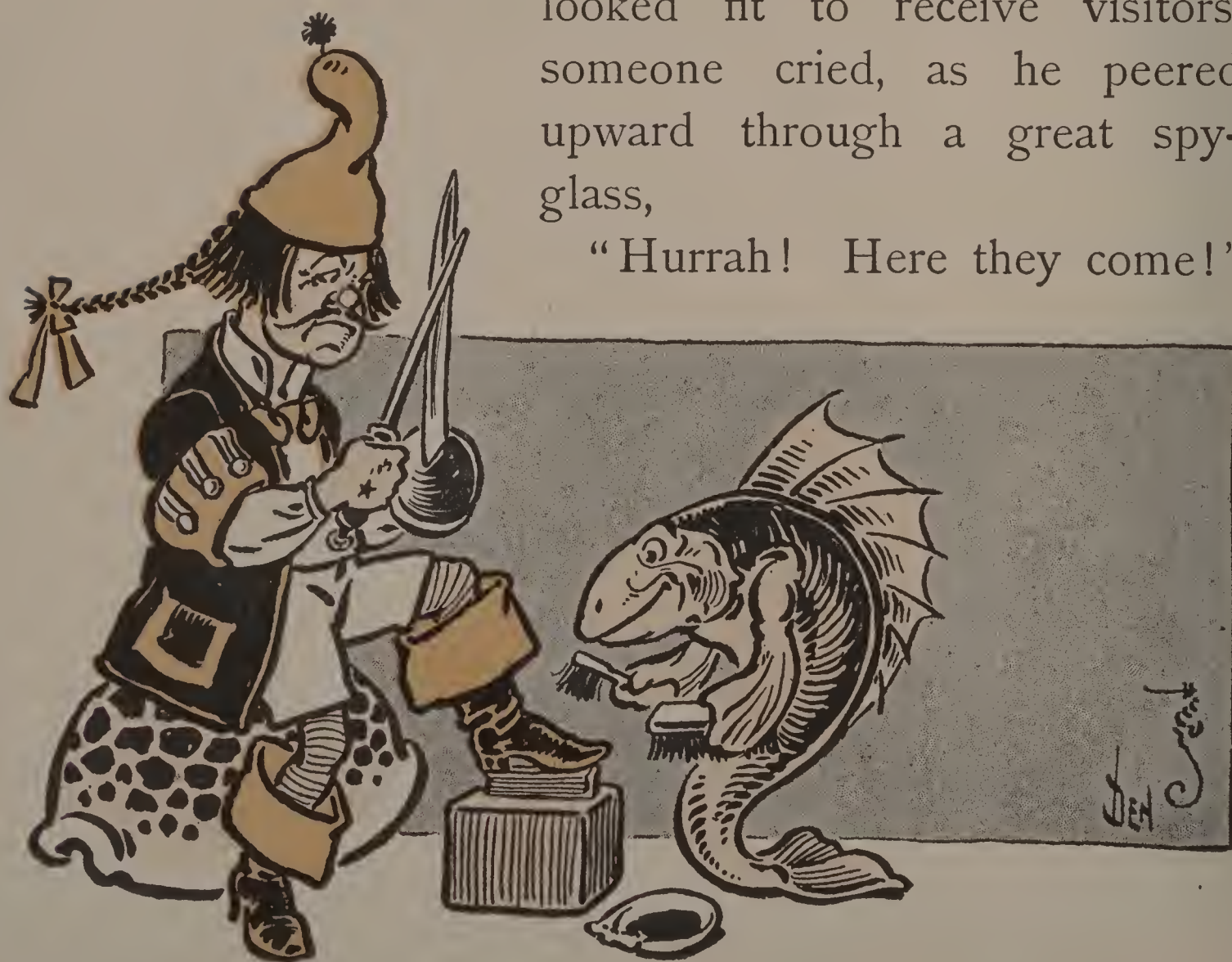
"For," said Davy, "I



must have everything ship-shape for such a great personage as the boy who is going to show us how to grow pumpkins down here. And for that other gentleman the Mariner spoke about. Let's see—what was his name? O, yes, Mr. Pie."

All was bustle and excitement. The house was swept, Mermaids cleaned the windows, the Pirates brushed their clothes, braided their hair and beards with fresh ribbons, sharpened their cutlasses and oiled their boots. The Parrot preened his feathers, Davy scampered here and there, seeing to everything, and, just as all was done and they were beginning to feel that they looked fit to receive visitors, someone cried, as he peered upward through a great spy-glass,

"Hurrah! Here they come!"





CHAPTER XII.

“DOWN! DOWN! DOWN!”

WHEN Pearl, startled by the Ancient Mariner's voice, fell head first into the Magic Spring, Joe Miller's only thought was to save his little cousin. Had the spring been an ordinary one all

would have been well, and Pearl little the worse for a wetting; but, as the Ancient Mariner knew, it connected with the bottom of the ocean, so that when Joe and Pearl disappeared beneath the water there was nothing to stop them until they should reach Davy Jones' locker.

The whole affair was part of the wily old Mariner's scheme. Believing that he could not coax or frighten Joe into either giving him his secret or going with him to the bottom of the sea, he had made Pearl fall into the spring, knowing that Joe would follow anywhere if his little cousin was in danger.

As the Ancient Mariner grasped the Pieman's hand and leaped in after the boy and girl, and felt the ground closing over the surface of the spring, he chuckled with delight. Once under the water he reached with his free hand till he found that of little Pearl, and then, certain that Joe was holding her other hand tightly, he dove straight down, dragging Joe, Pearl and the spluttering Pieman with him.

Joe and Pearl were, you may believe, dreadfully frightened. But, strange to say, it was

not any harder for them to breathe under the water than if they had been on land. The reason for this was, of course, that their plunge into the magic spring had cast a certain spell over them so that they could not drown. The Pieman was affected in just the same way, but it took him some moments to find it out, and until he did the Ancient Mariner had a hard task to hold him.

Down, down they plunged, Pearl clinging to Joe's hand with all her strength, but neither of them able to speak to the other. For a while it was as dark as your pocket, for the way led under the earth. Then they seemed to turn and go on the level, instead of downward, and this was so, for they had come to a turn in the tunnel that led them to a spot on the coast, but hundreds of feet below the surface of the sea. Here the tunnel opened into the ocean, and Pearl and Joe could now see better.

Pearl perceived for the first time that it was the Ancient Mariner who had her by the other hand, and she strove to free herself, but the old man held her tight as he bent his head and again dove down. Both Joe and Pearl,

frightened as they were, and wondering where they were going, could not help being amazed at the wonderful things they saw as they sped through the ocean, with the water buzzing in their ears.

Great, wide-eyed fish appeared in their path and scuttled away in fear at the strange objects. They missed bumping into more than one whale, and, as they passed one monster with his mouth wide open, Joe could not help wondering what would happen if he should swallow them and cast them up on the shore, like Jonah.

And he almost wished that the whale could swallow them, for well he knew where the Ancient Mariner was taking them all. Joe's plight, as they flew through the water, was more uncomfortable than that of the others; besides, for his hollow head allowed the water to rush through it at a great rate, hissing and bubbling.

Down, down, down, still sped the strange quartette, with never a word spoken. To Joe and Pearl it seemed that the journey, wherever it might lead them, would never end. What the Pieman's thoughts were no one but himself knew. Afterward, he told the Canner that all he could



Down, down they plunged, Pearl clinging to Joe's hand.

think of was his bread, which he had left to rise in the back room of his bake-shop.

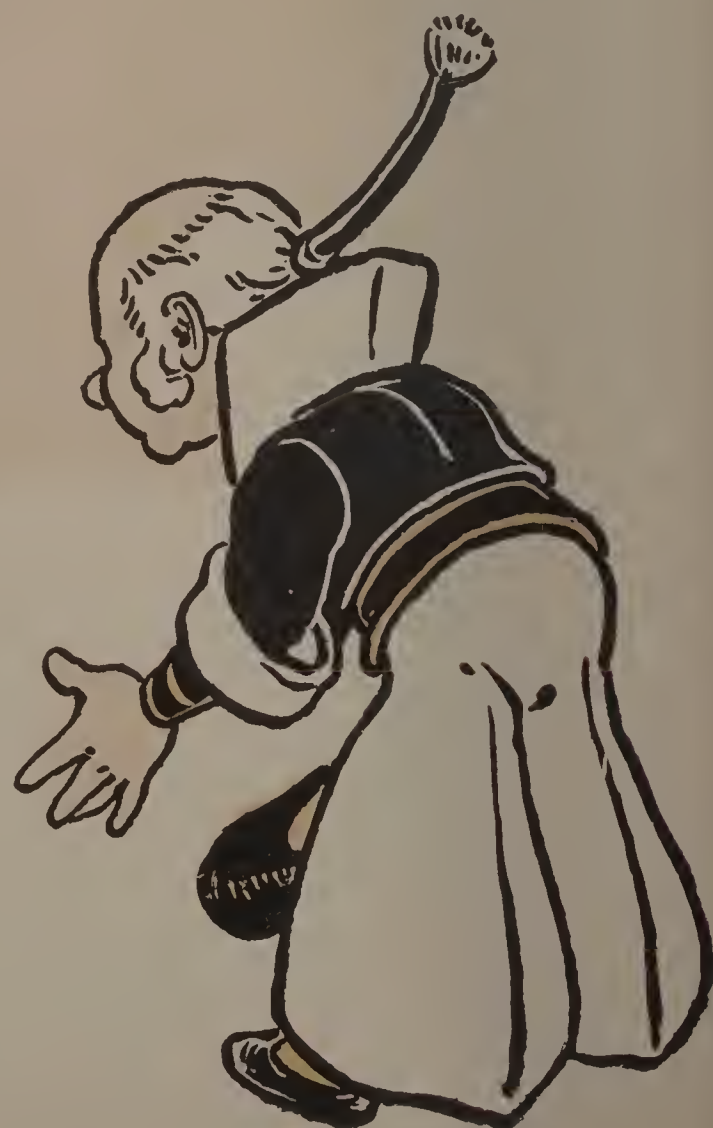
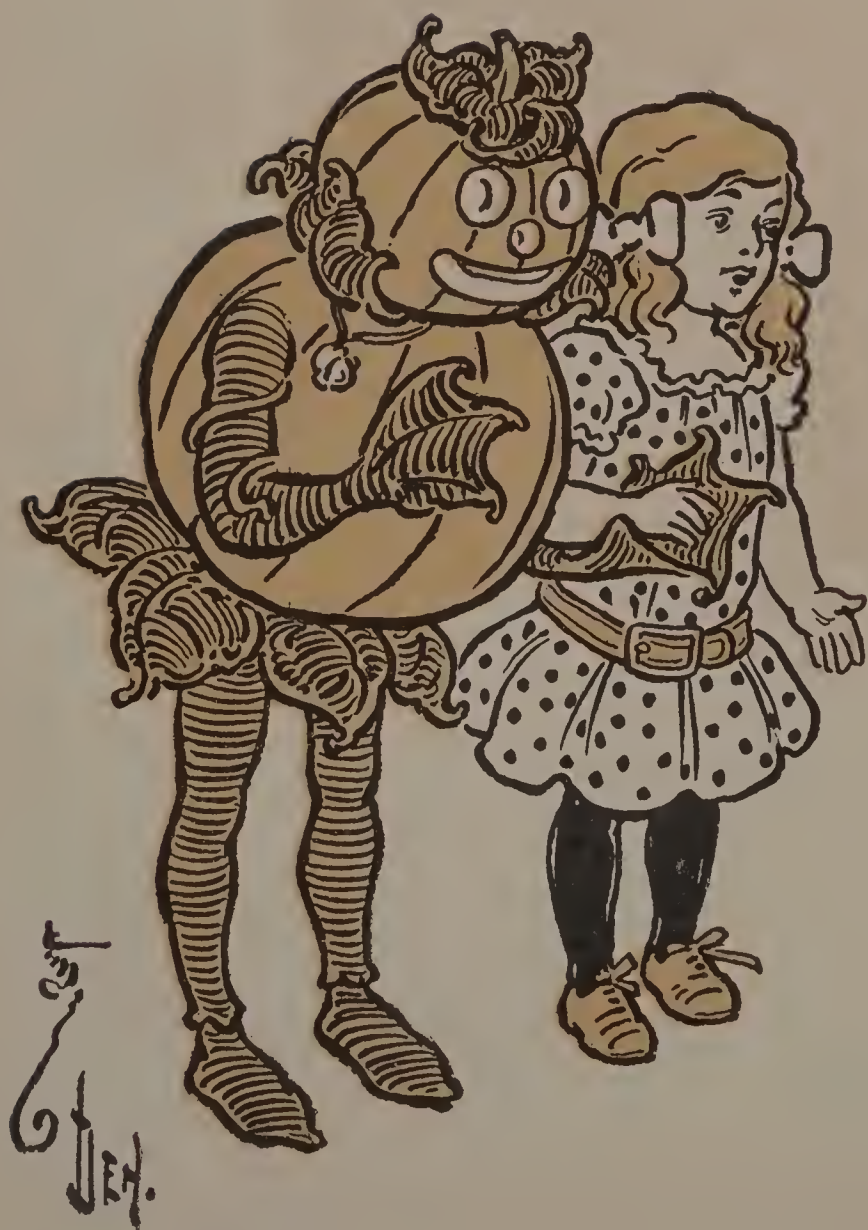
After awhile the ocean grew darker again, and Pearl and Joe thought that it must be because they were very, very deep down. It became so dark that they could hardly see, and Pearl was more than ever afraid, and clung more tightly to Joe's hand. But just as they were both beginning to think that they would never see another ray of light the gloom began to clear.

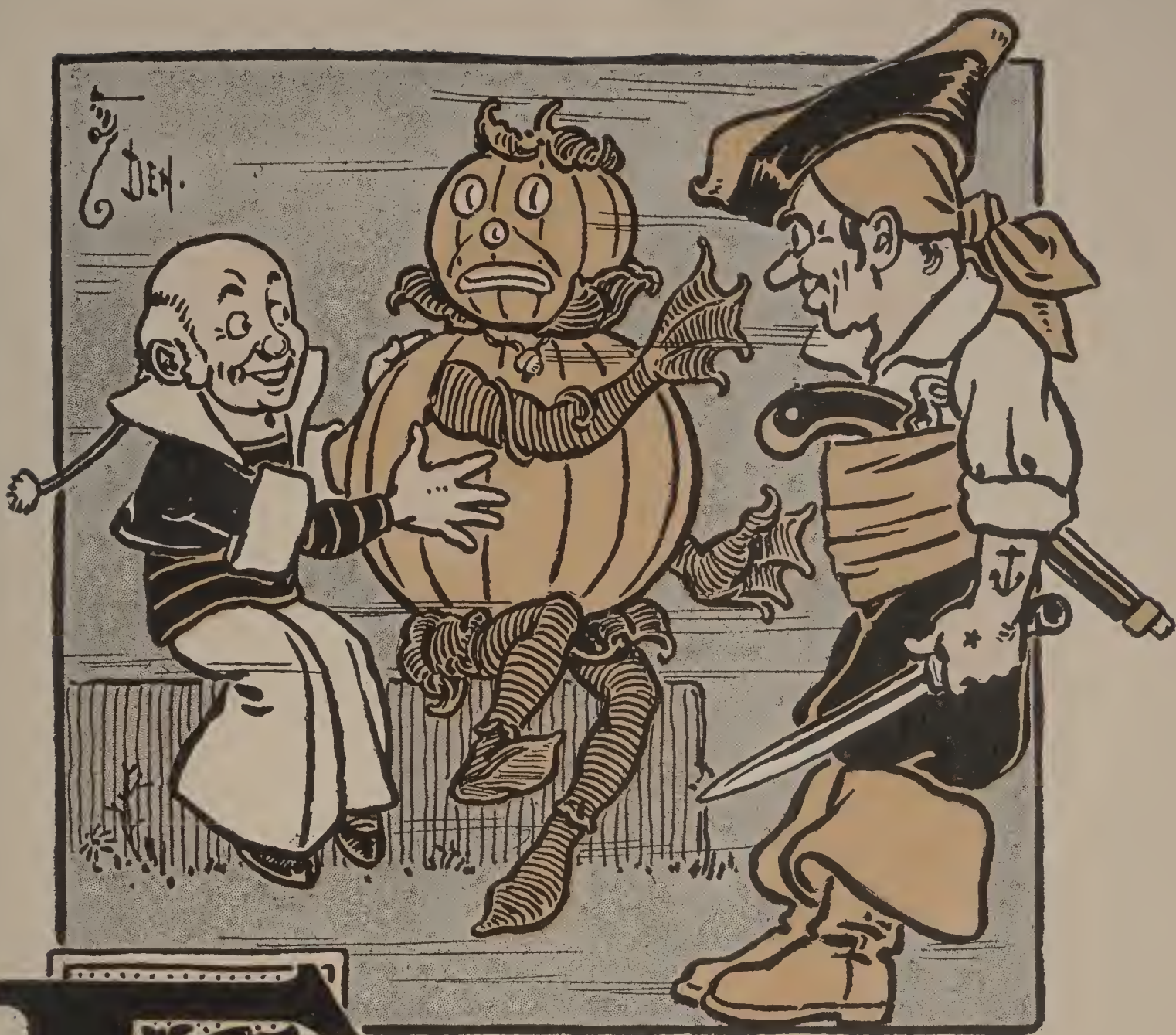
It grew lighter and lighter. Could it be that they were nearing the surface again? No, they were still going down, down, down. And the next instant they saw, far beneath them but very distinct, a queer little house, surrounded by a brilliantly colored forest.

In the yard in front of it were gathered a dozen or more men, clad as gaily as people on the stage. All were dancing and waving their arms, as though excited over something. A funny little man, who seemed more excited than any of the others, ran hither and thither, as though giving orders.

Nearer and nearer came the scene, till Joe and Pearl thought that they would surely crash

down on the roof of the little house. But the Ancient Mariner, who swam as well as any fish, gave a twist and a kick, the quartette turned completely around and began to go down feet first, and suddenly Pearl and Joe found themselves standing on what seemed to be firm ground, in front of the house, with the strangely clad men skipping about them in a ring and the little old man bowing and scraping a welcome.





CHAPTER XIII.

UNDER THE SEA.

FOR a moment the warmth of the greeting almost made Pearl and Joe forget that they had been kidnapped and were prisoners in Davy Jones' locker. The Ancient Mariner was all smiles as he introduced them, and the

Pirates, though they *looked* very savage, certainly *acted* very politely.

As for Davy, he was so tickled over their arrival that he skipped about like a dancing master, shaking hands with every one, including himself.

The Parrot, who announced that his name was "Ruffles," at once took a fancy to Joe, alighting on his shoulder, where he said,

"Pieces of eight, pieces of eight!"

"I wouldn't let him get too close to me, though," said Pearl, for she had read somewhere that parrots were very fond of pumpkins, and was afraid that this one might try to take a bite of Joe's head with his strong beak.

"I knew you'd come, Ancient one," said Davy to the Mariner. "I knew you wouldn't fail poor old Davy Jones, who's been trying all these years to raise a few pumpkins. And this is the young gentleman who is going to show us how to raise them, eh?"

Then he embraced Joe, again and again, and stood off and looked at him, passing his grizzled hands over the smooth shell of the big pumpkin that made Joe's body.

Joe did not like the way Davy and the Pirates looked at him. He had heard how hungry they all were for pumpkin pies, and dreaded to think how angry they would be when they learned that he could no longer tell them how to make the luscious vegetable grow under the seas. Poor boy! How gladly would he have given them his secret now, if he could only remember it!

When the Ancient Mariner told Davy and his boarders who Pearl was, and said that Joe would not have been with them but for her, the rough men would have eaten her with hugs and kisses but for Bridget, who flitted into view and carried the little girl off to her realm, the kitchen.

In the general welcome the Pieman was overlooked, till Davy happened to spy him standing alone. He rushed forward with outstretched hand, crying,

"Welcome, sir! I know who you are, and your bunk is ready. Welcome, Mr. Pie."

The Pieman cast a look of reproach at the Ancient Mariner.

"Have you been at it again?" he asked. "I do wish you'd let other folks get my name right if you can't."

“I apologize,” said the Ancient Mariner. “But why don’t you get one of the Pirates to tattoo your name on your forehead? However, I have something to tell Davy, and if you and the Pirates will look after Joe for a while I’ll be obliged.”

The Ancient Mariner and Davy went into the house, leaving Joe with the Pirates, who promised to be very careful with him, and the Pieman strolled off among the scenery.

The moment that Joe found himself alone with the Pirates he grew alarmed, for he was afraid that in their hurry for pumpkin pies they might cut him up.

“Are all boys on earth like you?” asked Blackbeard. “Because if they are they’ve changed since I was a Pirate and roamed the Spanish Main.”

“I’m the only one like me,” said Joe, “and I’ve been this way just a little while.”

“Do you suppose,” asked another, whom Joe recognized as Captain Kidd, “do you suppose that if we cut you up you’d feel it?”

“I think quite likely,” replied Joe, now really

frightened, and wishing that the Ancient Mariner would return.

"You might spare just a little slice," said another, the owner of the Parrot, whom his mates called John Silver. "Little boys should be generous."

But at this moment a fresh young voice was heard, and a dapper little chap, whom Joe had not seen, rushed out from the crowd and put his arm through that of the frightened boy.

"Stop scaring this lad," cried the young fellow to the Pirates, who laughed and turned away. Then he said to Joe,

"My name is Midshipman Easy, and I



won't let them harm you. I guess they're just trying to scare you, anyway, but let's go away from them."

"Thank you," said Joe, "I'd like to see if my little cousin is all right, if you please."

So Midshipman Easy led Joe around to the back of the house, where they found Pearl seated in a coral chair in the kitchen yard, telling her story to Bridget and the chambermaids. Bridget declared she had never heard of such a thing.

"But," said she, "you needn't be afraid while I'm here. If those pirates try any of their shinnanegans with you I'll throw hot water on them, so I will."

In a few minutes they saw the Pieman coming, who told them that Davy and the Ancient Mariner wished to speak to Joe and Pearl. So the children left their new friends and went into a little grotto in among the seaweed, where they found the two men.

Davy had heard all about how Joe had been captured by the Ancient Mariner, who also told him that the boy claimed to have forgotten his wonderful secret.



*They found Pearl
seated in a coral chair.*

"Perhaps, though," said Davy, "he's only shamming. If he is I'll make him tell me, somehow. If he doesn't — well, the Pirates expect pumpkin pie for dinner to-day, and they'll get it by fair means or foul."

So, when Joe came near him he began at once to try to gain the secret.

"Joe," said he, "the Ancient one tells me that you don't remember anything about making pumpkins grow. Is that so?"

"The moment the Corn Dodger turned me into a pumpkin boy," said Joe, "I forgot it."

"But," said Davy, "don't you think you could remember it if I was to let you go right home again after you told me?"

"No," said the boy, "not even for that."

"I've found," said the Ancient Mariner, "that when I've forgotten names I can remember them by going down the alphabet.

'Tain't A, 'tain't B, C, D, and so on, till I hit the right letter. It's a good plan."

"It's a wonder you'd never try that when you forget my name," said the Pieman.

At that moment there rose a roar from the Pirates on the other side of the house that

made Davy tremble and clutch the Ancient Mariner's arm in fear.

"It's the Pirates," he whispered. "And do you hear what they are saying?"

Joe and Pearl listened, and what they heard did not make them feel very easy.

"Pie, Pie, pumpkin pie!" shouted the Pirates in a gruff, sing-song sort of way. "Where's that pumpkin pie?"

"If you don't help me," said Davy to Joe, "I wouldn't be surprised if they cut you up. They're a desperate lot, you see."

"O, do try to think, Joe," cried Pearl, with tears in her eyes. "You must remember."

"It's no use," said Joe, shaking his empty head. "I can't do it."

"We mustn't let the Pirates know how matters stand," said the Ancient Mariner, "or

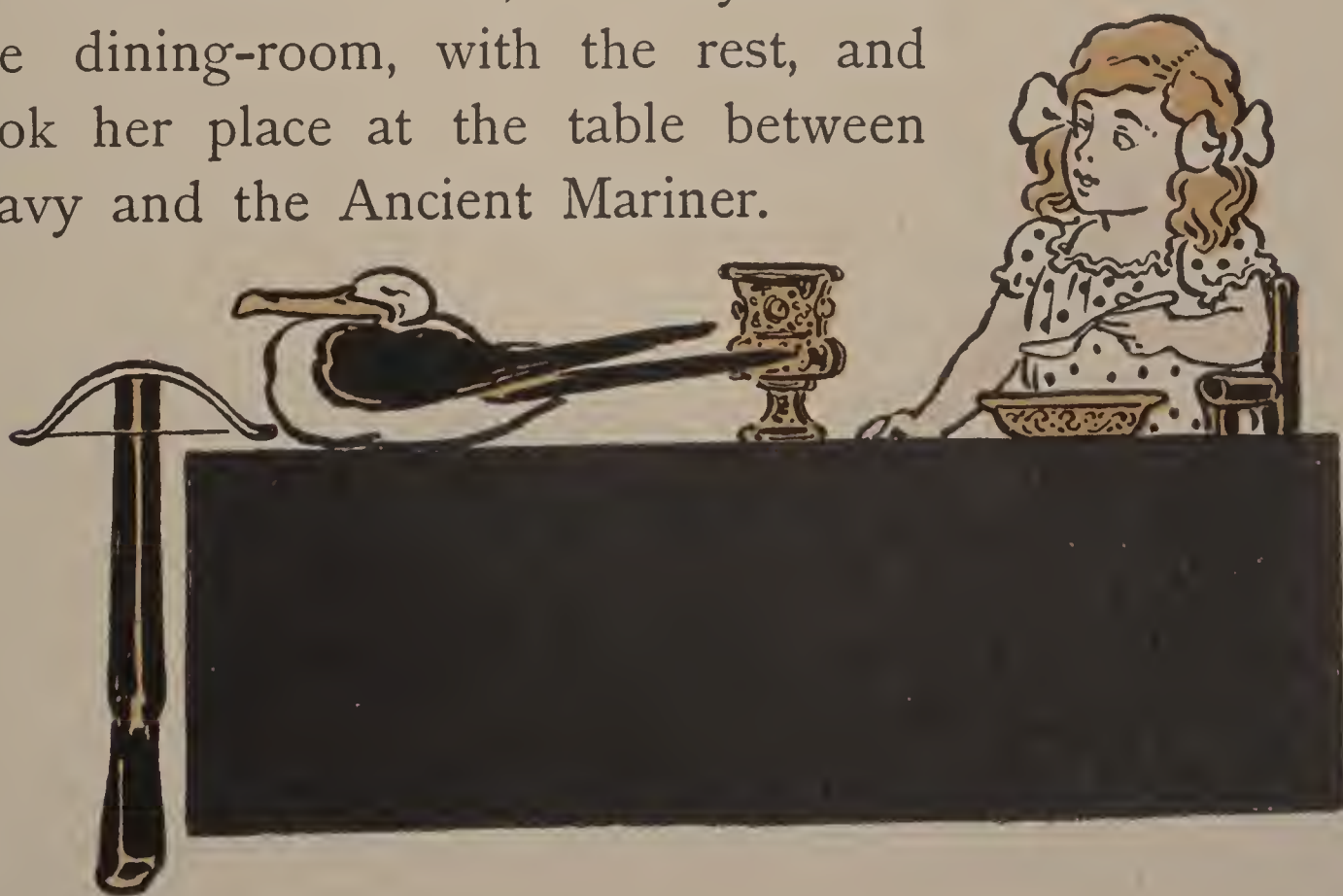


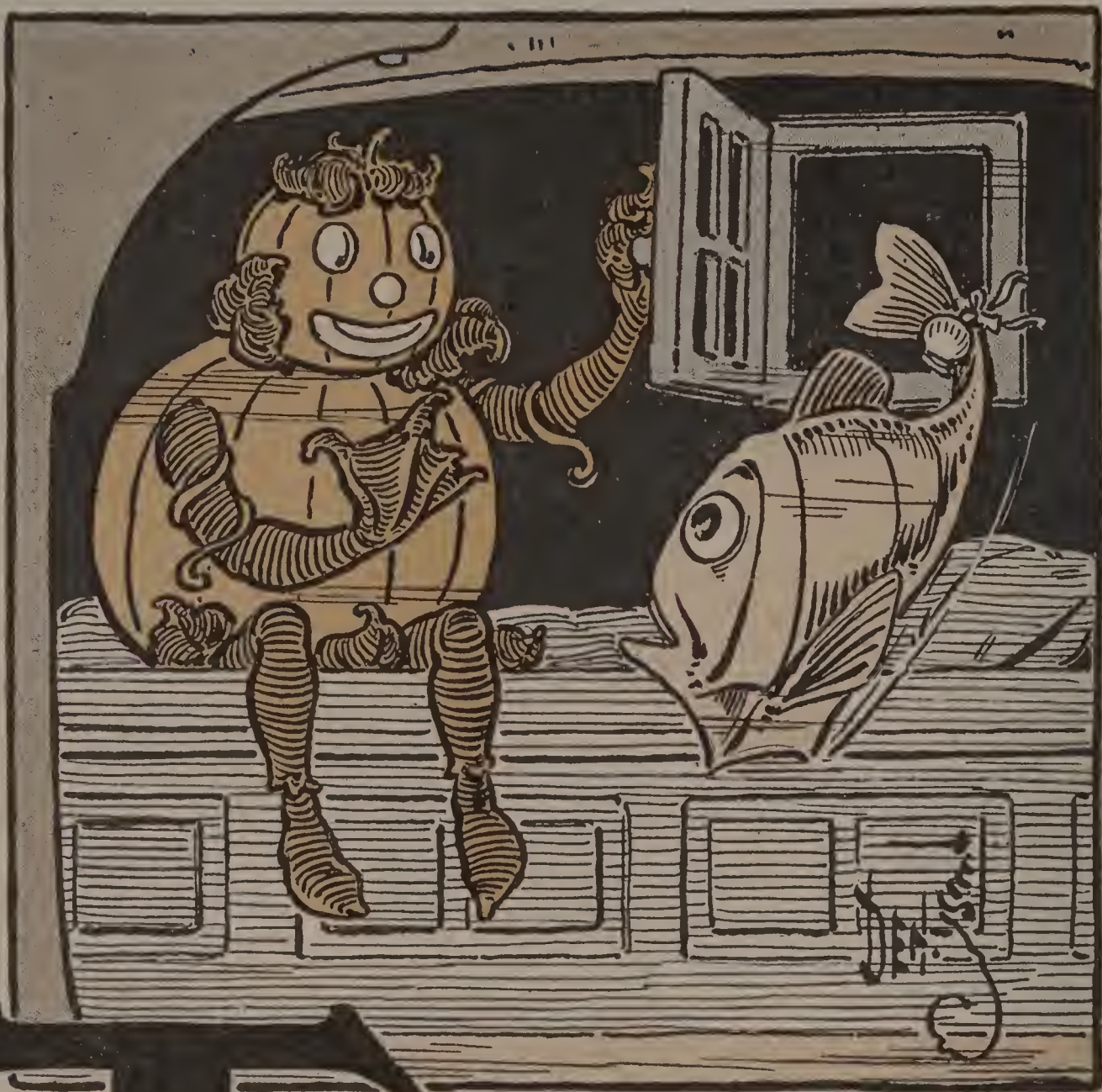
they might be revenged on us all. Tell them it takes some time for Joe to get things started, and in the meantime he's got to keep out of the way. Where shall we put him where he can be safe?"

"I know," said Davy, "we'll lock him up in Midshipman Easy's room. They'll never get him there."

So Joe was led quietly in at the back door of the house and up some rickety stairs to a little room. Into this they thrust him, and bade him be very quiet till they could pacify the Pirates.

As for Pearl, it was decided that she should assist in keeping the hungry Pirates calm, so, when the dinner-bell rang, the little girl went into the main cabin, as they called the dining-room, with the rest, and took her place at the table between Davy and the Ancient Mariner.





CHAPTER XIV.

MOTHER CAREY TO THE RESCUE.

THE little room in which Joe found himself a prisoner was like a cabin in a boat. It was very small, but nicely fitted up, with pictures of sea-fights and one or two maps on the walls. Along one side ran a



Pearl, meanwhile was guest of honor at dinner.

bunk, fastened to the wall, and over this was a little round window. Midshipman Easy must live comfortably, thought Joe as he looked around.

But the next moment the need of remembering his secret made Joe forget all else. If he did not tell Davy how to grow pumpkins, and that very soon, very likely the Pirates would eat him instead. As for Pearl, he did not know what they would do with her.

He must remember his secret. How did it go? He sat down on the bunk and squeezed his pumpkin-head between his hands, trying to force his memory.

"First you take a pumpkin! First you take a pumpkin!" But this was all that he could recall. In despair, he threw himself on the bunk, face down, and buried his head in the sheets.

Suddenly he heard a sound as of something tapping on the little window over the bunk. He looked up and saw a fish that was flapping its fin against the pane, to attract his attention.

Joe climbed on the bunk and opened the

window, and the fish swam into the room. Then Joe noticed, tied to the fish's tail with a piece of seaweed, a scallop shell, on the inner side of which was writing. He unfastened the shell from the fish's tail and read:

“YOU ARE IN DEEP TROUBLE, BUT DO
NOT BE AFRAID. I AM WATCHING YOU.
TRY TO REMEMBER YOUR SECRET: BUT
IF YOU CANNOT, AND THE PIRATES SEEK
TO HARM YOU, MAKE USE OF THE TALIS-
MAN WHICH I GAVE YOU IN THE CORN-
FIELD.”

To this was signed Mother Carey's name. Joe looked for the fish, thinking to send some reply, but the little messenger was gone and the window had closed behind it.

In the excitement of the last hour Joe had completely forgotten the sea-shell which Mother Carey had given him, and which still hung about his neck. But as he looked at

it now he recalled how he had tried to blow on it when he first found himself changed into a pumpkin, and how impossible it was because of the shape of his new mouth, which would not pucker around the mouthpiece on the shell. He raised his hand to his shiny face and found, to his surprise, that the skin of the pumpkin was now quite soft, owing, of course, to its having been under water so long. Looking in the glass Joe saw, to his delight, that he could move his features quite easily now.

He half put the sea-shell to his lips, intending to summon Mother Carey's aid at once, but reflected that he had better not trouble her just yet, as he might need her so much more a little while later.

So he sat down on the bunk again, happier than before, and tried to recall his method of making pumpkins grow.

Pearl, meanwhile, was the guest of honor at dinner in the big cabin below. The dining-table ran the full length of a big room which extended from end to end of the ship, and when Davy's boarders had all taken their

places, which they did noisily and with little ceremony, Pearl felt lost in the presence of such a great number of men. For she was the only lady present.

She sat between Davy Jones and the Ancient Mariner, at the center of the table. Facing her were some of the most savage looking of the Pirates, who shocked the refined little girl with their rude manners, for they ate with their knives and, when they took soup, made a tremendous noise about it, which, as Pearl knew, was not the way to do. And when mermaids came in from the kitchen with fresh dishes of things to eat, they grabbed for the choicest pieces, knocking over their tumblers and spilling food on the table.

Poor Davy was embarrassed, and tried to make the Pirates behave themselves better, for he wished Pearl to think that she was among gentlemen. But the only persons of the whole company who made the least pretence to good breeding were Midshipman Easy and Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines. If it had not been for them, Pearl would have

fared badly, in spite of Bridget's care, for Midshipman Easy always passed her everything before he helped himself, and Captain Jinks saw that she had the butter and the salt and other things.

Davy himself, I dare say, would have been more attentive, but he was too busy trying to keep his Piratical boarders half way quiet.

Pearl was not hungry in the face of so much excitement, but even if she had been she would have found it hard to eat the food that was offered.



"Won't you have some corned beef and cabbage?" asked Midshipman Easy, passing the dish to her. But it did not look a bit like the corned beef and cabbage to which she had been used at home. When she said so, Midshipman Easy explained.

"Of course it isn't real corned beef, and it isn't real cabbage," he said. "We have no cows down here, so we use fish instead, but call it by different names. Thus codfish we call corned beef, and when we wish to have spring lamb we use sharks. This cabbage is seaweed, but what of it? It's the best we can get, you know."

Pearl thought it quite sensible of them to make themselves believe they were eating things they liked, and fancied that she might get used to their ways in a little while.

"And I suppose," she said, "when you want ice cream, you just serve a plateful of sand, and call it by the other name."

The Ancient Mariner was too busy eating to pay much attention to Pearl throughout the meal, and the Pieman, who sat between

Captain Kidd and Blackbeard, was having a dreadful time with his neighbors, who spilled things in his lap and down his back in their hurry to get their share from the dishes as they were passed. Pearl wished that Joe were with her, but shuddered to think what might happen to him at dinner with such hungry people as the Pirates.

Finally, the dinner was over, and the mermaids began to clear away the plates.

"And now," whispered Captain Jinks to Pearl, "we are going to have dessert. What do you think there is going to be?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," said Pearl. "Do you know?"

"Yes," said Captain Jinks. "I'll whisper to you." He leaned across the table and put his lips close to Pearl's ear, saying,

"Pumpkin pie!"

Davy overheard him, and leaped from his chair.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Do you boarders think that you are going to have pumpkin pie as soon as this?"

"Why, yes," said Blackbeard. "The pump-

kin boy is here, isn't he? And surely he has had time to raise a few pumpkins."

In vain Davy tried to explain to the Pirates, who had all risen to their feet and clustered about him angrily, that it took some time to make pumpkins grow. The Pirates, who had been waiting so long for their treat, had lost all patience and with it all their sense. They climbed on the table, they leaped up and down in anger, shouting,

"Pie, Pie, Pumpkin pie!"

And then Pearl did a most foolish thing, for which she was sorry the moment after. But the Pirates made her so angry that, before she thought, she said,

"Joe hasn't had time to raise any pumpkins, you horrid men, and even if he did have you wouldn't get any pie, for he isn't going to tell you how he makes them grow."

As the Pirates heard this their rage knew no bounds.

"What!" cried Blackbeard, "Isn't going to tell us? Where is he?"

"You shan't touch him," cried Pearl, and darted from the room and up the stairs to

warn Joe that the Pirates were after him. With a yell Blackbeard drew his sword and rushed after her, and all the others followed him, let Davy and the Ancient Mariner and Midshipman Easy and Captain Jinks do all they might to hold them back.

But Bridget, who heard the noise from the kitchen, and Pearl reached the room where Joe was locked in first, and, placing her lips to the keyhole, Pearl called,

“Joe, Joe, jump out of the window. The Pirates are after you.”

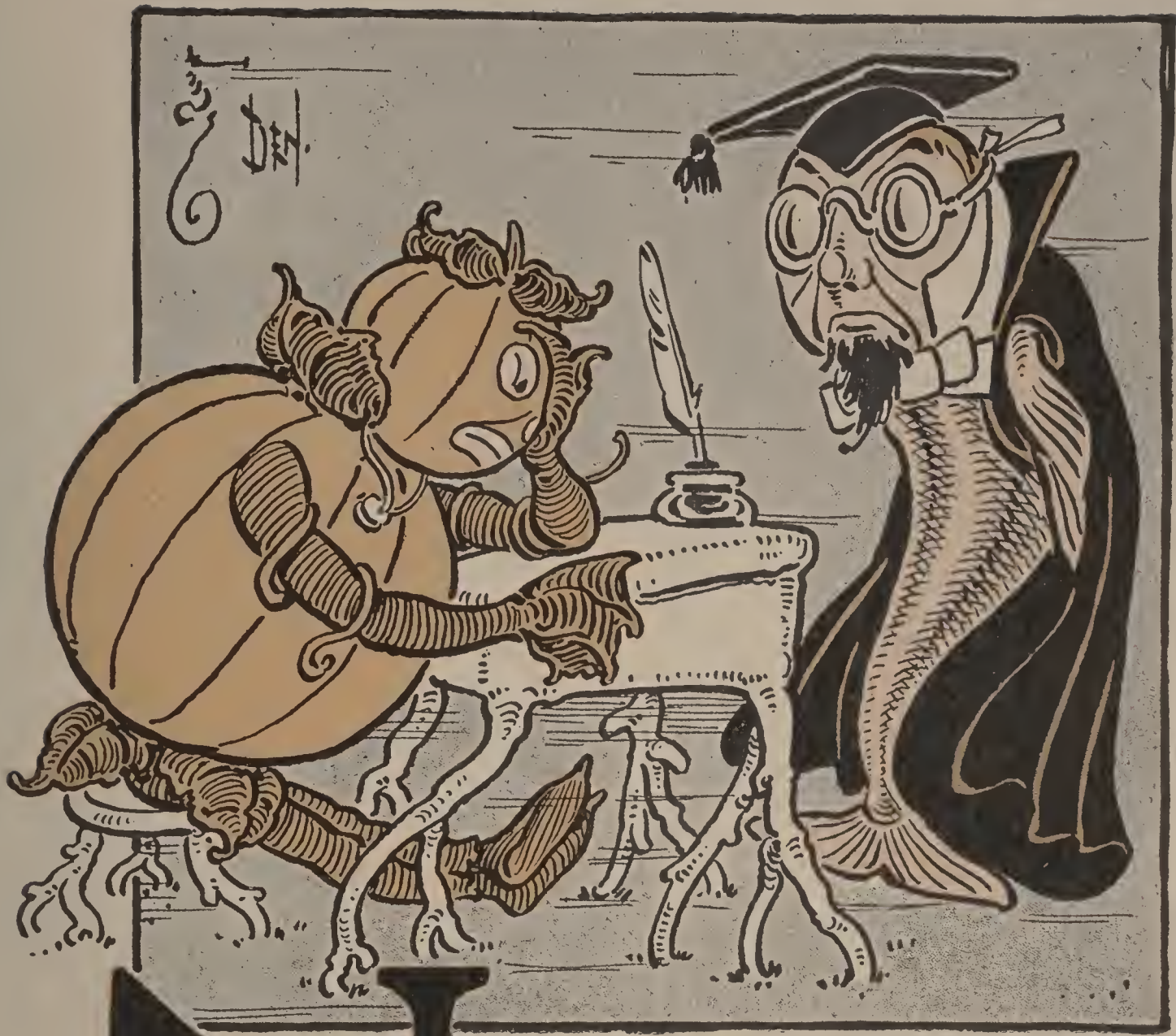
Joe heard his little cousin's voice. He also heard the shouts of the Pirates as they thronged up the stairs. He looked at the window. It was too small by far for him to get through. Suddenly he remembered Mother Carey's talisman. Placing the sea-shell to his lips he blew three loud blasts.

Immediately there appeared, just outside the window, two immense swordfish. With one stroke of their sharp swords they cut an opening in the side of the ship large enough for Joe to climb through, and as he did so a fairy, whom he recognized as Sea-Mew,

one of Mother Carey's Chickens, drove up on the back of a shark, saddled and bridled, leading another shark by the reins. She beckoned to Joe who leaped on the back of the second shark and off they went, just as the door of Joe's room was burst open, and the Pirates tumbled in, shouting,

"Where is he? We've come to cut him up!"





CHAPTER XV.

IN MOTHER CAREY'S PALACE.

NO doubt you remember that the Corn Dodger, too late to join his friend, the Ancient Mariner, when he leaped into the magic spring, was caught by the knees as the ground closed over the water, and was carried off by his

old enemy, Ike Cannem, the Canner, leaving Pearl's father and mother, the Schoolmaster and the others, gazing stupidly at the ground.

The Canner never stopped running till he had put a good distance between himself and the cornfield, and then, binding the Corn Dodger hand and foot to a fence post, he sat down to gloat over his good luck. For, though he had not succeeded in getting any of the big pumpkins he had come so far to find, he had the finest specimen of corn in the world, he thought, and his fortune was made.

The Corn Dodger, tied to the fence post, kicked and squirmed and begged to be released, but the Canner only laughed.

"No, sir," said he, "I've got you, and I'm going to take you to my factory, away down in Bermuda. There I'll can the greater part of you, and sell you at a dollar a can. I'll save enough to plant and raise some more for next year."

The Corn Dodger had been no easy weight to carry, and as the Canner thought of having

to take him all the way to the village he was troubled.

"I guess I'd better get a wheelbarrow," he said, finally. "You'll be safe enough there, and I won't be gone long."

So, whistling a lively tune, he started down the road to borrow a wheelbarrow, leaving the Corn Dodger bound to the fence post.

Now, the Corn Dodger was not so bad a Sprite as you must have imagined. He had worked the transformation in Joe Miller without thinking of the trouble it would cause everyone, and was already very sorry for what he had done. All his life he had been doing kind things, such as setting aside a part of every crop for the field mice, woodchucks, rabbits and other animals of the fields, when he might just as easily have kept them from getting anything to eat. These little creatures were very fond of him.

As he struggled with his bonds, and called for help, a little field mouse heard him, and poked his nose out of a nest in the dry stubble in a field near by. The mouse's sharp eyes saw the Corn Dodger fastened to the

fence, and he jumped out and ran to the Sprite's rescue.

"Quick, field mouse!" cried the Dodger, as he saw the little fellow coming, "untie me and I'll never forget you."

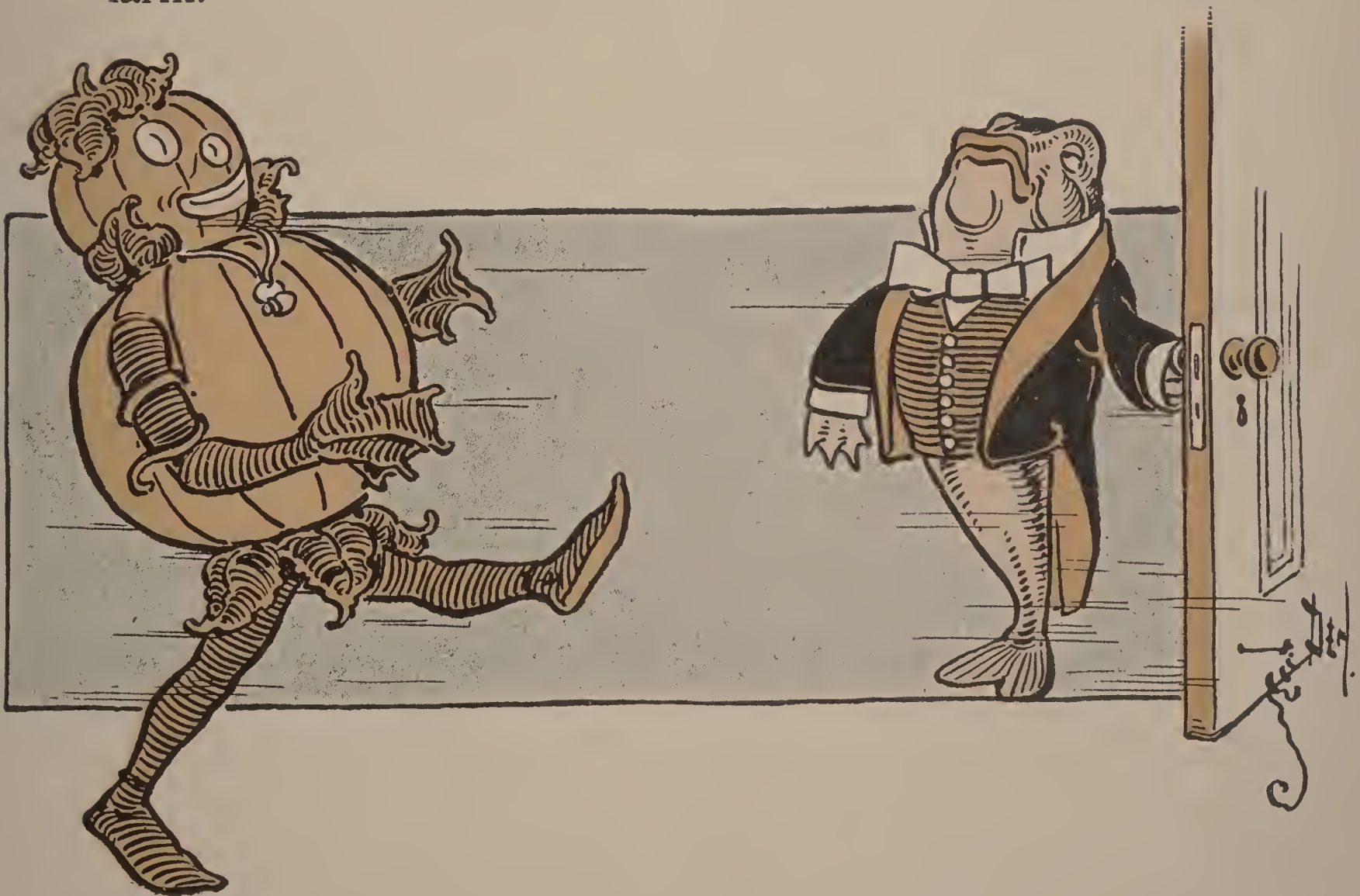
The field mouse's teeth had the cords cut in less than no time, and with a shout of triumph the Dodger disappeared in the darkness, just as the Canner returned up the road with a wheelbarrow.

Dropping the wheelbarrow, the Canner bounded after the Corn Dodger, who led him a merry chase in the moonlight across farms and barnyards, through bramble and swamp. The Dodger was making for a cave in the mountain nearby, which led, as he knew, to the regions under the ground, and, he hoped, to the bottom of the sea, for there, and there only, did he think he could escape the Canner.

But as he reached the mouth of the cave and dove in, the Canner was right on his heels, and, with no thought of where it might lead him, leaped after the Sprite. They were lost in the darkness, where we may leave

them for the present, and return to Joe, whom we left escaping from the Pirates on the back of a shark.

Sea-Mew said nothing to Joe as the two sharks sped on the water, until they were some distance from Davy Jones' locker. Then, as they turned a corner, Joe saw before him a beautiful palace, built of coral, and surrounded by a forest of seaweed of more brilliant colors than the autumn leaves on the hills about Farmer Pringle's farm.



“Here we are, safe and sound,” cried Sea-Mew, and alighted from the shark’s back, throwing the reins to a bluefish in livery, who also took charge of Joe’s swimming steed.

Then, leading Joe by the hand, the fairy hurried on over the sparkling sands, until they reached the doors of the palace, which were opened by another fish in livery.

As they crossed the portals, Joe stopped, dazzled by the beauty of the scene. If the outside of the palace was gorgeous, there were no words to describe the interior. They were in a great hall, formed of countless arches of pink, green, white and yellow coral, through the pillars supporting which shone a soft light that made the walls, ceiling and floor glitter like diamonds. Overhead there fluttered winged fish, like birds; sweet music filled the place, made, as Joe found out afterward, by trumpet fish hidden in little caves in the walls.

While Joe was observing these wonders there came the sound of martial music, and in marched a regiment of soldiers, headed by

a band of fiddler crabs and shellfish, who clanged their shells together like cymbals or drums. And, following them came a chariot, drawn by sea-horses and escorted by more soldiers, fish, like the others.

In this chariot sat Mother Carey, more beautiful than when Joe had first met her. She nodded her head to the boy as she swept past on her way to her throne room, to which Sea-Mew bade Joe follow with her.

The throne room was even more gorgeous than the great hall, but there is no use in trying to describe it. Just close your eyes and dream of all the beautiful things you have ever seen or read about, and you may begin to imagine something like it. But I do not think it possible. At one end of the room was the throne, made of coral, mother-of-pearl, and shells, and upon it, surrounded by her Chickens, sat Mother Carey, who beckoned Joe to approach.

Tremblingly the boy did so, and knelt before the Fairy, who said,

“Joe, I have saved you from the Pirates, as I said I would. You cannot be harmed

while you are here, and no one can take you away as long as you obey me in everything. But beware. Davy Jones is now my enemy, and he and the Pirates will try to get you. They are very tricky, and when they find they cannot take you by force will try other ways. So be careful. In the meantime, you must try to remember your secret for making pumpkins grow. That is the only way you can get back to earth. I shall put you in charge of a very learned person, the Owl-fish, who will give you memory lessons in hopes of helping you. I leave you in his care."

Joe thanked Mother Carey, and was led away by the Owl-fish, who wore a cap and gown and spectacles, and looked very wise and not unlike Mr. Dudley, the Schoolmaster up in Vermont.

It was vacation time in the school, so that Joe was the only pupil. Many little boy fish, however, came to the windows and looked in at him as he sat at his lonely desk, and wondered why he had to study when they were playing. But Joe, while he would have

liked to be outside with them, enjoying himself, bent to his task eagerly, and did all he could to help remember the lost secret of making pumpkins grow.

The Owl-fish tried all the methods he knew, but to no avail. Joe could remember the date of the battle of Bunker Hill, how old Methuselah was when he died, the Declaration of Independence from beginning to end, and no sum in arithmetic was too hard for him to do at once. He rattled off the capitals of all the States and the Kings of England with no trouble, but when it came to the matter of pumpkins all he could say was,

“First you take a pumpkin! First you take a pumpkin, and then——” And that was as far as he could get.

All day long he sat at his task. Away into the night he stayed awake in his room, trying by the light of some phosphorus fish to find the answer in many books. All next day he kept at it, but it was no use.

Late in the afternoon, as he sat at his

desk in the quiet schoolroom, wondering if he should ever see his home again, and fearing to think of what had become of Pearl, an idea struck him.

If they could only get the Corn Dodger! The Sprite might turn him back into a boy now, he thought. Then he would be sure to remember the secret. But how could they find the Corn Dodger?

If Joe had only known it, the Sprite was very near him at that very time, for when he dove into the cave, pursued by the Canner, his course led him down through the water towards Davy Jones' regions.

Joe looked out of the window, hopelessly, and the next moment gave a shout that made the Owl-fish rap with a ruler on his desk for silence in the schoolroom. But Joe did not hear him. Instead the boy, with his face pressed against the window pane, was cheering aloud, for he saw, floating through the water, kicking and scrambling, the Corn Dodger himself, and, some distance behind him, the Canner.

Joe threw open the window. The Corn



The Corn Dodger dove in.

Dodger dove in, and the window was shut again with a bang, just as the Canner came plump against it with such force that his silk hat was crushed down over his eyes, leaving him struggling to get it off.





CHAPTER XVI.

PLOTS AND PLANS.

THE Owl-fish, frightened nearly out of his scales, fled from the room, leaving Joe to handle the Corn Dodger alone. The boy threw the Sprite to the floor and sat on him, till the Corn

Dodger begged to be let up.

"Do with me as you will," he pleaded, "only don't flatten me into fritters!"

But Joe was bound that the Corn Dodger should not escape him, and called loudly for help. Several of the Palace guards came hurrying into the room, and the Corn Dodger, bound securely, was led before Mother Carey.

"Well," said Mother Carey, when the Sprite had finished speaking, "you have done Joe a great injury, and ought to be severely punished, as you probably will be when the Queen of all fairies hears of your actions. In the meantime, though, I am glad that you are willing to repair part of the injury by changing Joe back to a boy. Do it right away, so that he and Pearl can go to their home on the land, after Joe has remembered his pumpkin secret and given it to Davy Jones.

"Alas, Madame," cried the unhappy Dodger, "I am willing but powerless. I am only a land sprite, and under the sea I have no power at all. I can only make the change in Joe in my own realm, the corn field."

"I am not so sure of that," said Mother

Carey. "I shall consult the Fairies' Guide Book, a copy of which I have in my library, and see what it says. Many fairies have powers that they do not know they possess, and this wonderful book tells all about such things. Until I am sure that you cannot make the change in Joe here I shall hold you a prisoner."

The guards were about to lead the Corn Dodger away when he gave a scream and began to search frantically through his pockets.

"I've lost it, I've lost it!" he cried.

"Lost what?" asked Mother Carey.

"My can-opener," replied the Corn Dodger. "My only opener. All my life I've been afraid of being caught and canned, and have carried the can-opener to cut my way out. And now, when the Canner is right on my track, it's gone. I had it when I was diving through the water, but now it's lost."

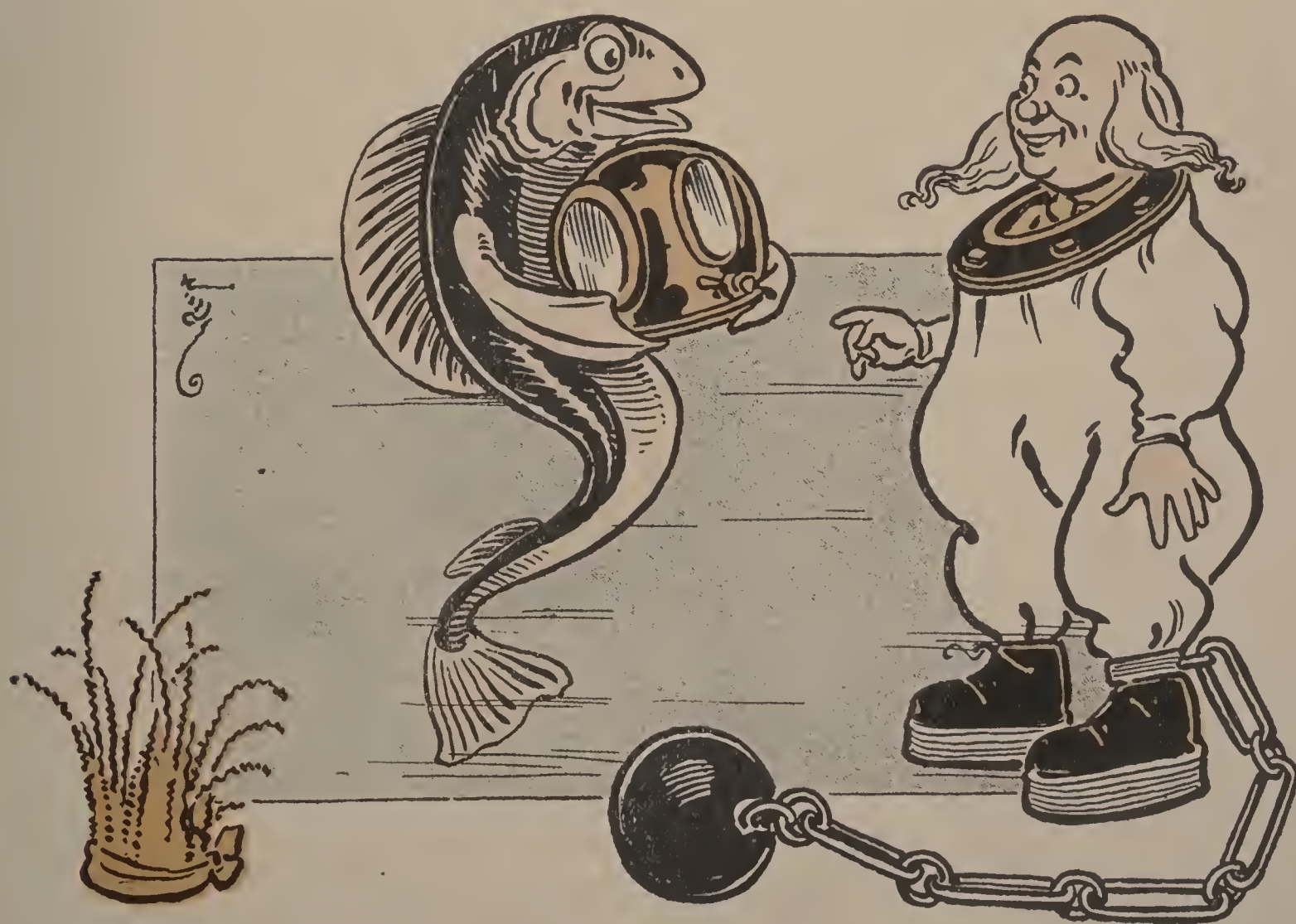
He looked so pitiable that even Joe was sorry for him, but Mother Carey smiled.

"You need not fear just now," she said. "The Canner cannot get you in my palace, but if you like there is an old diver's suit

in the storeroom, and you can put that on. Then you will be safe anywhere."

The Corn Dodger thanked Mother Carey with tears in his eyes, and put the diver's suit on at once when a servant brought it from the storeroom. Then a big ball and chain were attached to his leg, and he was left to roam about the palace, a prisoner, the weight of the ball keeping him from going very far.

Joe was very happy over the Corn Dodger's capture, for he was sure that Mother Carey would find some forgotten rule in the Fairies' Guide Book that would enable the Sprite to



turn him back into a boy. Then he would be able to remember his secret, tell it to Davy and the Pirates, and, with Pearl, return home. He could have danced with joy, but for worrying about Pearl, though the scouts that Mother Carey had sent out to find how she was being treated had brought back word that the Pirates had done the little girl no harm.

The Pirates and Davy, when they found that Joe had escaped them, never thought of blaming Pearl. They knew that Mother Carey had carried the boy away, and their anger was all directed toward her.

Davy himself was wild at the Fairy's interference, and loudly declared that he would recapture Joe.

"I'll teach her to mind her own business," he cried. "I'll get the boy if I have to tear her coral palace down."

But Bridget laughed at him, and said, with her arm about Pearl,

"It isn't the likes of you that'll ever get Joe away from good Mother Carey, bless her! And now that you've lost all hopes of learning how to raise pumpkins, perhaps you'll be good

enough to let this little girl go home to her papa and mamma."

"No," said Pearl, "I don't want to go till Joe goes with me."

The Pirates could not help cheering Pearl for her bravery and loyalty to Joe, and Captain Kidd picked her up on his shoulders and rode her around the place, while the others formed a procession behind her, waving their hats. It was growing late, however, so Bridget led Pearl away to a little room next to hers, and put her to bed, nicely tucked in beneath a coverlet of sea-moss.

But there was no sleep for Davy and the Pirates, that night.

You know that when you want something and find suddenly that you can't have it, you want it a great deal more than you did when you thought you could get it without any trouble. So it was with the Pirates and the pumpkin pies. All these years they had been waiting for pumpkin pies, and on Joe's arrival it seemed as though their desire was about to be gratified. But now that the boy and his secret for raising pumpkins had gone, their

mouths simply watered for pumpkin pies, and they were bound to have them, by fair means or foul.

"It's just like this," said Davy to the Ancient Mariner and the Pieman, as they sat in a dark corner of the yard at midnight, looking over their shoulders at the Pirates, who were talking angrily among themselves. "Those boarders of mine are going to have pumpkin pies this time, or know the reason why. I've got to get them at least one meal of pie, somehow. If Joe has lost his secret, and I guess he has, we must get him and cut him up. There's no way out of it. They've already tried to tear my house down and this time they'll do, sure."

"But how," asked the Pieman, "are we going to get Joe?"

"That's just it," said Davy. "The Mariner, here, always has ideas. Suppose he suggests some way."

The Ancient Mariner thought long and deeply. At last he said,

"If we could make Joe think that Pearl was in need of his help, he'd come to her and



then we could catch him."

"Mother Carey wouldn't let him," said Davy.

"But Mother Carey needn't know about it. I'll find out what room in the coral palace he has, and if it's far enough away from where the Fairies sleep I'll tell you the rest of the plan that I've thought out."

He would say no more, and went off alone, to inspect Mother Carey's palace, while Davy and the Pieman devoted the rest of the night to keeping the Pirates good-natured and hopeful. They had a hard time doing this, and when morning came both were pretty well tired out.

Fresh from a good night's rest, Pearl appeared in the doorway of Davy Jones' locker, and, with Bridget, summoned the Pirates and Davy to breakfast. At the table the little girl was surprised to notice how much more attentive everyone was to her than they had been at dinner the day before. She did not know that Davy had told them part of the Ancient Mariner's plan for Joe's capture, and that she was to be used as a means of getting the boy away from Mother Carey's palace. Midshipman Easy, who had not been allowed to hear the Pirates' planning during the night, also noticed the change in the Pirates' actions, and suspected that there was something in the wind. He made up his mind to be on the watch.

"I never was cut out to associate with these Pirates," Midshipman Easy said to Pearl, "and if I could go up to your home on earth when you do. I'd be very happy. Do you think you could arrange it?"

"I'm sure my papa and mamma would be very glad to see you," said Pearl.

During breakfast the Ancient Mariner ap-

peared and took his place at the table beside Davy. Pearl heard him whisper,

“He’s in the third room from the front, on the side by the sea-fan forest.”

This meant, though she did not know it, that the Ancient Mariner had located Joe’s room in Mother Carey’s palace.

On hearing this news, Davy became very cheerful, and his merriment was caught by the Pirates, so that Pearl thought she had never met jollier people. If Joe had only been with her the little girl would have been quite happy.

After breakfast, while some of the Pirates took Pearl for a romp among the shell fields near the house, the Ancient Mariner led the Pieman aside and showed him something that he had in his pocket. The Pieman’s eyes bulged as he saw it.

“Why,” said he, “it’s a can-opener.”

“Yes,” said the Ancient Mariner, “I found it under Joe’s window at Mother Carey’s palace. It means that the Corn Dodger’s somewhere around.”

“What’s he doing here?”

"I don't know. But he mustn't see Joe Miller. If he does he might change him back to a boy again, and then Joe could defy us. And if those Pirates don't get him to cut up for pumpkin pies, don't you suppose that Davy'll have revenge on me?"

The Pieman shook his head. "I wouldn't say anything about the can-opener," he said. "Just hurry the plans to catch Joe."

"Aye, aye," said the Ancient Mariner, "and in the meantime, this can-opener comes in very handy to open oysters with."

Oysters were the Ancient Mariner's pet food. But those in the sand and on the rocks about Davy Jones' locker were very large, quite big enough, some of them, to contain a man in their great shells. So that they were hard to open. The can-opener, as he said, was just the thing, and, finding a giant oyster near by, he stooped over it and began prying between the shells, while the Pieman looked on in wonder.

Suddenly the shells parted as though released by a spring, and the Ancient Mariner fell backward, head over heels, as from the

inside leaped forth not an oyster, but a man.
And that man was Ike Cannem, the Canner,
of all people!





CHAPTER XVII.

MOTHER CAREY OUTWITTED.

HE CANNER!" cried the Ancient Mariner.

"None other!" replied the latter, with a smile, as he proceeded to smooth his high hat on his sleeve. "And all I have to say is that I'm glad you've come along, for I was getting tired of being in there. I'm a canner, and I

can can almost everything, but I never thought I'd can myself."

Davy Jones and the Pirates came running to the spot when they heard the Ancient Mariner's cries of surprise, and to each of them Mr. Cannem gave one of his cards. Then he told his story.

"Finding no way of getting into the palace after him, I looked about for a place to put up for the night. I walked till I grew tired, and reached this spot, where I sat down to rest. I must have sat in the oyster shell while it was open, for the next thing I knew it closed over me, and I was a prisoner."

The Canner's story threw the Pirates into great turmoil.

"If the Corn Dodger has been captured by Mother Carey," said Blackbeard, "she'll make him turn Joe into a boy right away, and then we'll never find out how to grow pumpkins, and never have a pumpkin pie!"

"No pumpkin pies!" moaned the others.

"We must be quick," said Davy. "Ancient, what's your plan that you've been keeping so secret?"

The Ancient Mariner told them. Davy Jones was the proud owner of six wonderfully trained sea-horses which he used to draw his state chariot when he went on his yearly visit to Neptune, the King of the Wind and Waves. For, though Davy Jones was all powerful in his part of the bottom of the ocean, he was ruled, like Mother Carey and all other submarine fairies, by this ancient person, and, once a year, had to travel to his kingdom, far away, to tell how he had been managing affairs in his charge. The sea-horses Davy had trained himself, and they were so intelligent that they could do almost any trick he asked of them.

It was the Ancient Mariner's idea to let Pearl take a ride in the chariot, driving the sea-horses herself. The animals were to be told to go by the window of Mother Carey's palace that lighted Joe's room. When they should arrive there, they were to pretend to be frightened, and cut up at a great rate, which would certainly alarm the little girl and make her call for help. Joe, seeing her plight through his window, would surely try to go to her aid, and, if he could, force his way through the bars

of the window. Once outside, the Pirates, hidden behind the great sea-fans that grew near by, were to capture him and carry him off to Davy's locker before the palace guards could know what was going on.

"Splendid!" cried Davy when the Ancient Mariner finished. "Harness the sea-horses at once, and tell Pearl that she can go for a drive. Tell her, too, that she may pass Mother Carey's palace, where she may see Joe, perhaps."

So the chariot, drawn by the six sea-horses, came out from the stables, and Pearl was summoned.

When Pearl saw the prancing steeds she was a little



afraid to drive them alone, but Davy assured her that they were perfectly safe, and would not hurt even a baby Mermaid. "Besides," he added, "I'll talk to them."

This he did, whispering in each sea-horse's ear. But what he told them was what the Ancient Mariner wanted them to do, though he warned them not to really run away or tip the chariot over, for he did not wish to have Pearl injured in any way.

Pearl cracked her whip and the chariot started, when a voice cried,

"Ho, wait for me!" It was Ruffles, the Parrot, and Pearl reined in her prancing steeds till the fat bird waddled to the chariot and climbed aboard, perching himself behind her.

"Pieces of eight!" screamed Ruffles. "Get up!"

Off went the sea-horses, with Pearl waving her hand to the Pirates and Ruffles chuckling and flapping his wings.

When Pearl was fairly out of sight, six of the Pirates, headed by Blackbeard, hurried away by a roundabout road, to reach the forest of sea-fans ahead of the little girl. This

they did, and remained in hiding, with their eyes fixed on a window in Mother Carey's palace, the one that belonged to Joe's room.

In a few minutes they heard Pearl's chariot approaching, the seashell bells on the sea-horses jingling, and Ruffles' voice screaming,

"Get up! Get up! Pieces of eight!"

Their hearts beating with excitement, the Pirates awaited the moment when the chariot should reach Joe's window, where the sea-horses were to pretend to be frightened and make believe tip the chariot over.

Within the palace sat Joe Miller, heavy-hearted. Mother Carey was still in the library peering over the pages of the Fairies' Guide Book, but as nothing had been heard from her in all these hours there seemed little hope that she would find a way for the Corn Dodger to change him back into his own form under the sea. It seemed useless, but Joe was still trying to think of some way to recall his pumpkin secret, and sat beneath his window, saying over and over again,

"First you take a pumpkin! First you take a pumpkin!"

Suddenly he heard the sound of bells from outside, and the crack of a whip. Then there fell on his ears a sound he knew well. It was Pearl's voice, raised in laughter, for the sea-horses, on nearing Mother Carey's palace, had already begun to caper and prance. The little girl, however, remembering that Davy had said they were perfectly safe, feared nothing, and laughed to see them shake their manes and tails. Joe leaped to the window as he heard his little cousin's voice, and looked out. He saw her coming by in the chariot, and the next moment his heart sank, for the sea-horses now began to rear and plunge in a terrifying manner, and Pearl's merry laughter turned to a scream of fear. She dropped her whip and the reins and clung to the sides of the chariot, which rocked as though it must surely tip over.

"She will be killed," cried Joe, and beat against the window pane with his fist. The pane, which was made of crystal coral, broke under his blows, and the next instant the boy had leaped upon the sill, smashed the coral bars outside, and jumped to the ground.

He threw himself in the way of the advancing sea-horses, ready to catch their bridles as he had stopped many a runaway horse on Farmer Pringle's Vermont farm. Pearl saw him, and cried,

"Save me, save me, Joe!"

But with a shout, the Pirates leaped from behind the big sea-fans which had hidden them till now, and threw themselves upon Joe. Blackbeard and Captain Kidd took him in their strong arms and others held the sea-horses till they could jump into the chariot beside Pearl. Then Blackbeard cried,

"Quick! Quick! Fast as you can go!" And the sea-horses dashed off toward Davy Jones' locker, Pearl screaming, Ruffles flapping his wings and crying "Pieces of eight!" and Joe struggling helplessly in the grasp of the Pirates.

Mother Carey, her Chickens and the Palace guards heard the tumult, and rushed to the palace gates. But it was too late. The Chariot was far in the distance when they reached the scene, and though Mother Carey sent her

fleetest guards after the Pirates they could not overtake them.

In the excitement the Corn Dodger was forgotten. Knowing only that he was a prisoner, and that he must escape, though having no idea where he was to go, the Sprite ran out at a side gate of the Palace, carrying his ball and chain. He could not go very fast, but he struggled on through a maze of giant seaweed. Just as he thought that he might stop and take a breath or two, he heard a voice that he knew, saying,

“At last!”

He turned and saw the Canner, who, with a cry of delight, lifted him in his arms, ball and chain and all, and ran into a little clear space in the seaweed forest. There the poor Dodger saw, saddled and bridled, a monster shark. Upon its back leaped the Canner still holding the Dodger in his grasp, and cried to the shark,

“Bermuda, as quick as you can possibly swim!”

The Corn Dodger screamed for help. Through the glass headpiece of his diving



The sea-horses now began to rear and plunge.

suit no one could hear his voice. The Canner laughed.

"Forty cans of corn at a dollar a can," he said, "and enough left over to plant an acre! Git ap!"





CHAPTER XVIII.

AT NEPTUNE'S COMMAND.



WHEN Mother Carey realized that she had been outwitted by Davy and his Pirates, she was both angry and ashamed. But there was no use crying over spilled milk, for well the fairy knew what Joe's fate

would be unless she could save him. The Palace guards who pursued the flying chariot reported that Joe was securely locked in the hold of a wrecked vessel near Davy Jones' locker, and guarded by the most savage of the Pirates. The Pieman, too, she was told, had driven Bridget from Davy's kitchen, and was even now mixing a big batch of dough for pastry.

"It is just as I feared," cried Mother Carey, when she heard this last report. "They are going to cut Joe Miller up for pumpkin pies." Then she summoned her Chickens, and bade them hurry to the palace of Neptune, which lay at the very opposite end of the world, under one of the southernmost seas.

"Tell Neptune," said Mother Carey to her Chickens, "all that has occurred, and beg him to stop Davy Jones before it is too late."

Without stopping even to change their dresses for travelling, the Chickens set off for the realm of Neptune. Never had such swimming been seen as that of the sharks which they rode, for the Fairies plied whip and spur, and spurs made of sea urchins, with

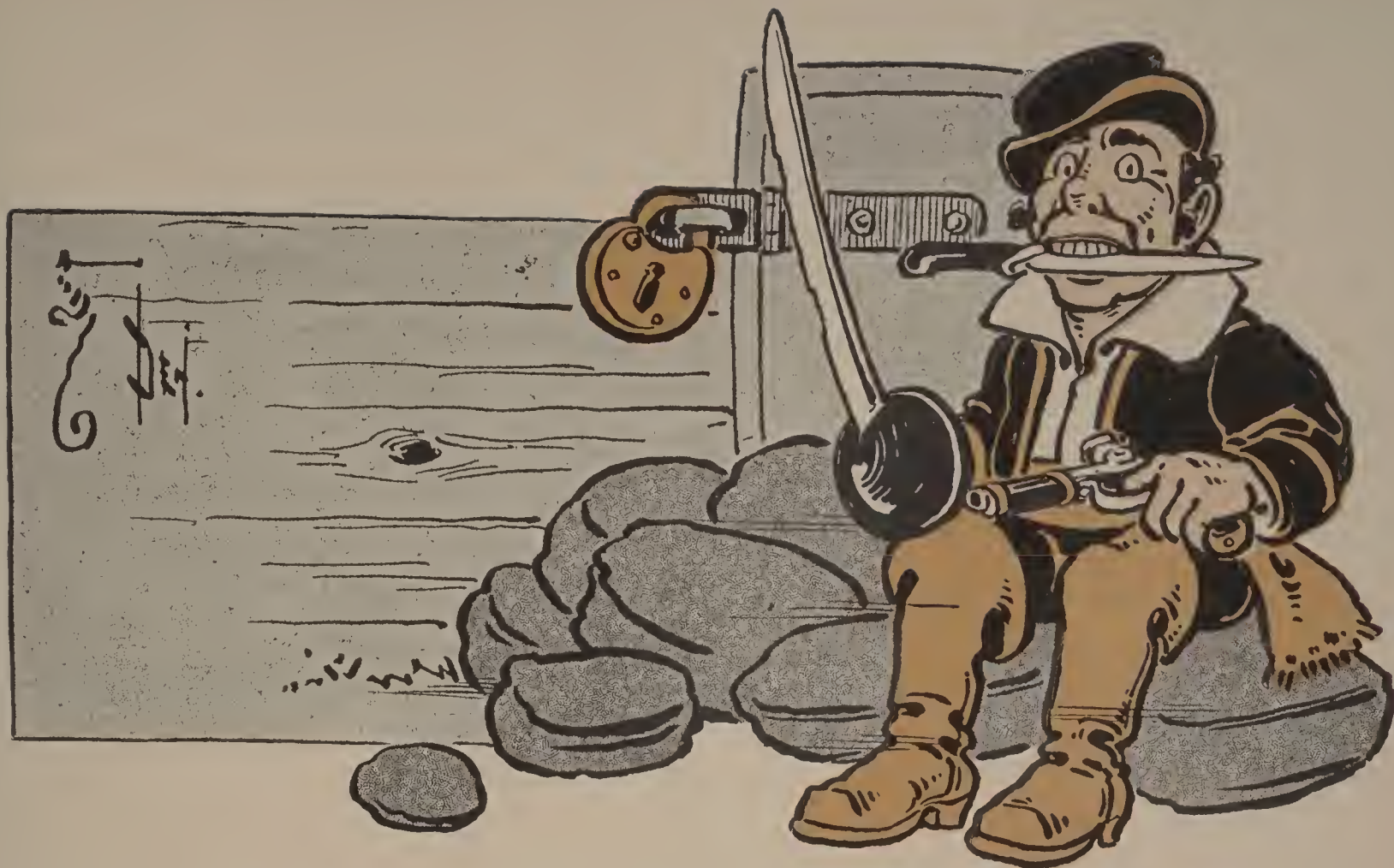
the sharpest of spines, make even a shark go faster.

So eager was everyone about the coral palace to save Joe that nobody stopped to give the Corn Dodger a thought, and he was not missed. As for the Pirates and Davy, the Ancient Mariner and the Pie-man, they were so overjoyed at capturing Joe that the Canner's sudden absence caused no comment.

The return of the Pirates to Davy's locker was hailed with shouts of joy. Davy fell on the Ancient Mariner's neck and embraced him, while the Pirates who had been awaiting the success or failure of the plan capered like children out from school.

An old wreck lay half hidden in the sand, near the locker, and into this they thrust Joe, piling rocks and seaweed against the hole that admitted him, till he could hardly have gotten out, even if a guard of ten Pirates had not been placed there to watch him.

Little Pearl, who watched all this going on, wept pitifully, for she guessed what it meant. And, when she fled to the kitchen to seek



comfort from Bridget, and found the Mermaid cook out in the backyard, with the kitchen door shut against her, and the Pieman inside, the little girl was sure that Joe's end had come.

"Look at him in there," cried Bridget, "using my kitchen for a bakeshop." Through the window the Pieman could be seen, his sleeves rolled up, and his arms thrust into a pile of dough which he was kneading and rolling, just as Pearl had often seen him do in his bakery at home when he was getting ready to make pies.

She shuddered at the sight, and also when she saw some of the Pirates making a roaring

fire in the kitchen stove, and putting a great kettle on the stove, while others were buttering the insides of pie-plates and setting them in a row on a table near at hand.

"O," Pearl cried to Bridget, "they're going to cut Joe up and make pumpkin pies of him."

"The villains!" said Bridget. "I hope the stove will blow up."



Even Captain Jinks, whom Pearl had counted as a friend, seemed happy at the thought that he and his fellow-boarders were soon to have pumpkin pie, and went about with a smile, smacking his lips, and now and then looking in at the kitchen window to see how the Pie-man was getting on. Only Midshipman Easy came to comfort her, and, as he said, what could he do against so many of the others.

"I promise, though," said he, "that I won't eat one bit of the pumpkin pies made of Joe, though I am very fond of pastry."

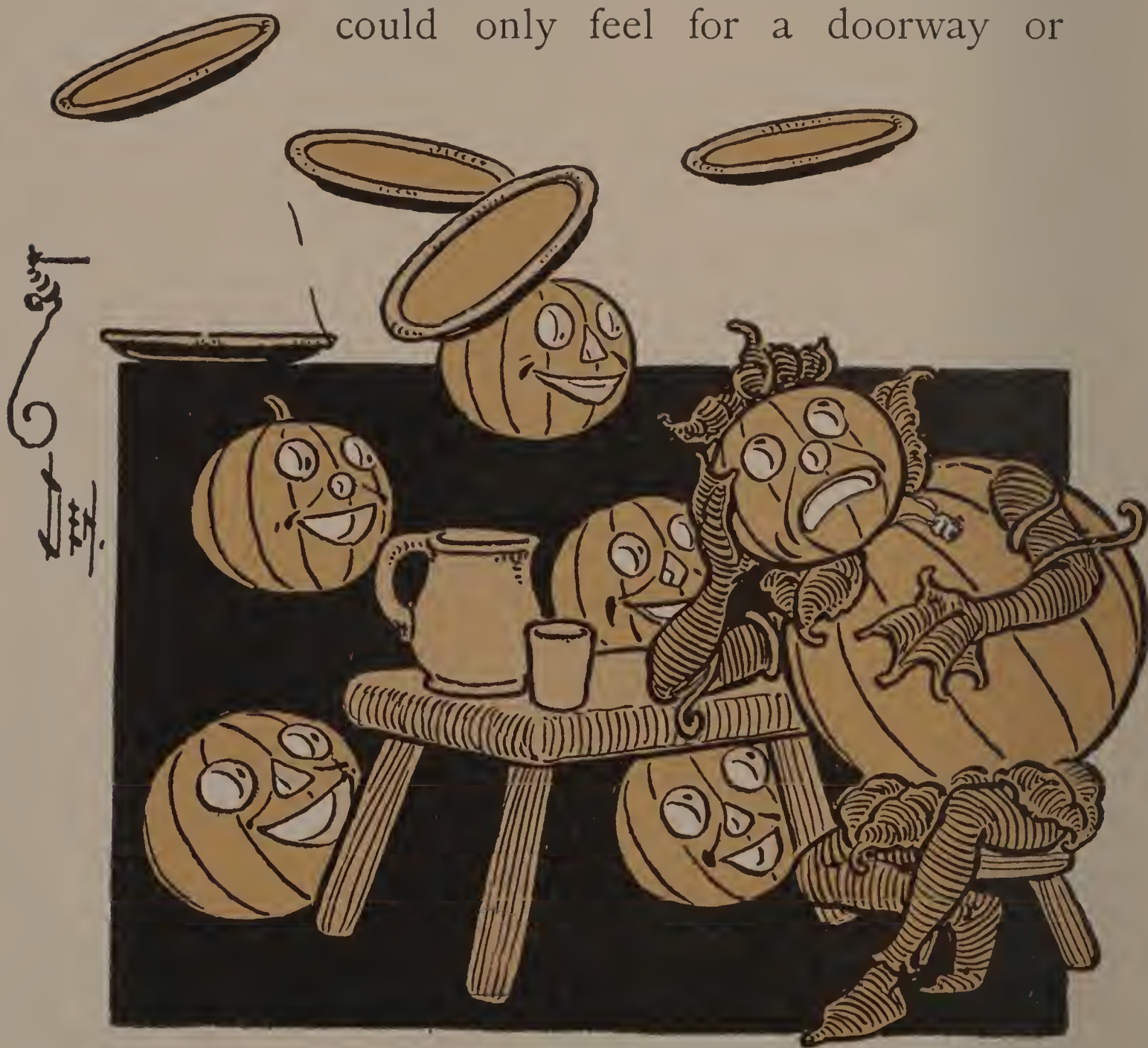
Pearl thought it very nice for Midshipman Easy to say this, but, as far as she could see, it made no difference who ate the pies. That wouldn't save Joe after he was once cut up and cooked.

To poor Joe, in his prison in the old wreck, the minutes seemed like hours. It was very hard that he should be made into pies, and he wondered if it would hurt very much. Then he thought of all the pumpkins he had cut up for Jack-o'lanterns, and thought that perhaps this was to be his punishment.

"But I didn't know I was hurting them when

I did it," he said to himself. "And they seemed to like it. At least, they all had smiling faces." All of which was very true, but, as Joe had made the faces himself, it was he, and not the pumpkins, who had caused the smiles.

It was very dark in the old wreck, and Joe could only feel for a doorway or



some place which might give him a chance to escape. But he could find none, and at last gave it up and sat down to await his fate. He thought of all that he had ever done, and most of it seemed very, very wicked. His life seemed to have been a failure as he looked back, and he thought that perhaps people would not be so sorry to have him go. All but Pearl!

As he saw his little cousin in his mind's eye, Joe could have cried, for he knew that Pearl loved him and would be very sad to have him cut up for pumpkin pies.

"I wish I could say good-bye to her," he thought. At that moment he heard a tapping from outside, and a whisper, that said,

"Joe, Joe, are you in there?"

It was Pearl, and, hunting about, Joe found that the little girl was speaking through a knot hole in the side of the wreck. He placed his lips to the hole and answered,

"Yes, Pearl, I'm here, and there's no way to get out. Have you come to say good-bye?"

"O, Joe," cried Pearl, "don't talk that way,

I'm sure you'll be saved yet, though I don't know how."

"I'm afraid not," said Joe. "Tell me, what are they doing?"

Pearl told him of the Pieman's plans, and how the Pirates were going about, smacking their lips. Joe sighed,

"I guess it'll all be over soon," he said. "Will you be sorry to lose me?"

"O, Joe!" The little girl's voice shook with sobs.

"Pearl?"

"Yes, Joe, dear."

"When I'm—I'm baked in pies, will you save a little bit to remember me by?"

"Yes, Joe, if I get a piece. But you know how hungry these Pirates are, and you won't make so very many pies, you know."

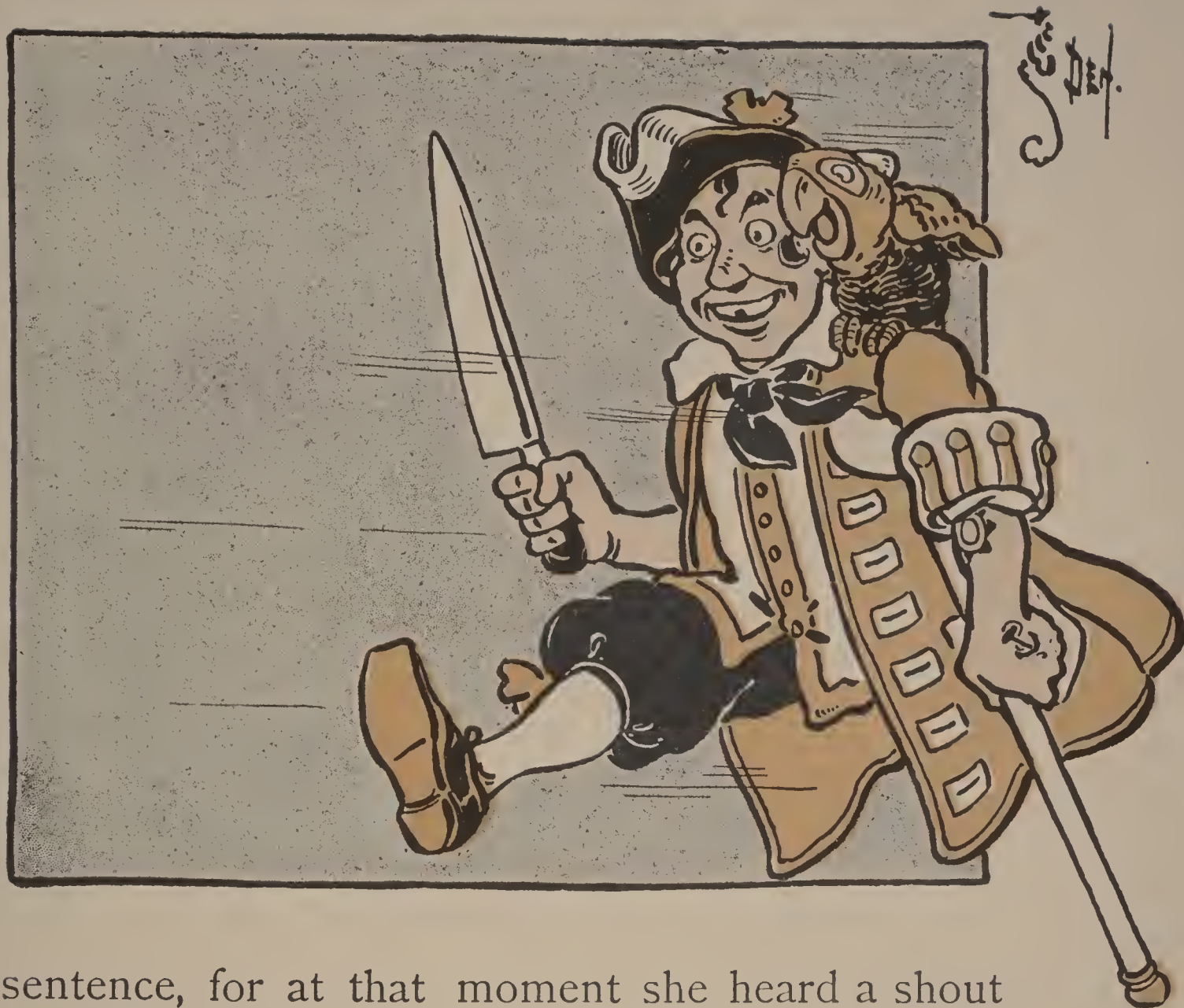
Joe thought for a moment.

"No," he said, "I suppose not. But, Pearly?"

"Y-yes, Joe, dear?"

"See if you can't get some of the seeds and plant them on the farm. Then when they grow and get to be big pumpkins——"

But Pearl could not hear the rest of Joe's



sentence, for at that moment she heard a shout from the house, and saw Blackbeard and some of the other Pirates coming toward the wreck. In the midst of the group was the one-legged Pirate, Long John Silver, with Ruffles perched on his shoulder, and the bird was screaming,

“Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Cut him up! Cut him up!”

And in John Silver's hand there was a long knife!

They were coming after Joe. Unable to stand the sight, Pearl covered her face with her hands as the foremost of the Pirates reached the wreck and savagely began to tear away the rocks and seaweed from the opening.

"I'm very sorry, little girl," said Davy Jones, as he saw Pearl, "but the Pirates will have pumpkin pies, and as there's no other way——"

"Don't you speak to me, you cruel, heartless, mean man," cried Pearl. "And you just wait, all of you! You'll be sorry if you ever touch my little cousin!"

For a moment the Pirates stood still. Then John Silver said, gruffly,

"Heave ahead, mates! I'm getting hungry."

"Yes," said the Ancient Mariner, "and the dough's ready!"

With a shout, the Pirates again went at the barricade. Then Captain Kidd and Blackbeard led Joe out, and Silver, knife in hand, began to stump around the boy, who stood like a statue, determined to show them that he was ready to meet his fate bravely.

"Where shall I begin?" asked Silver.

"Anywhere," said the Ancient Mariner.

"Then here goes," said Silver.

There came an expectant look on the faces of the assembled Pirates as John Silver made ready to attack Joe.

"Aha!" chuckled Captain Kidd to his neighbor, "at last we're going to have pumpkin pies!"

"But isn't he brave?" exclaimed Blackbeard. "What a fine Pirate that boy would have made!"

"One! two! three!" said Silver. "Now——!"

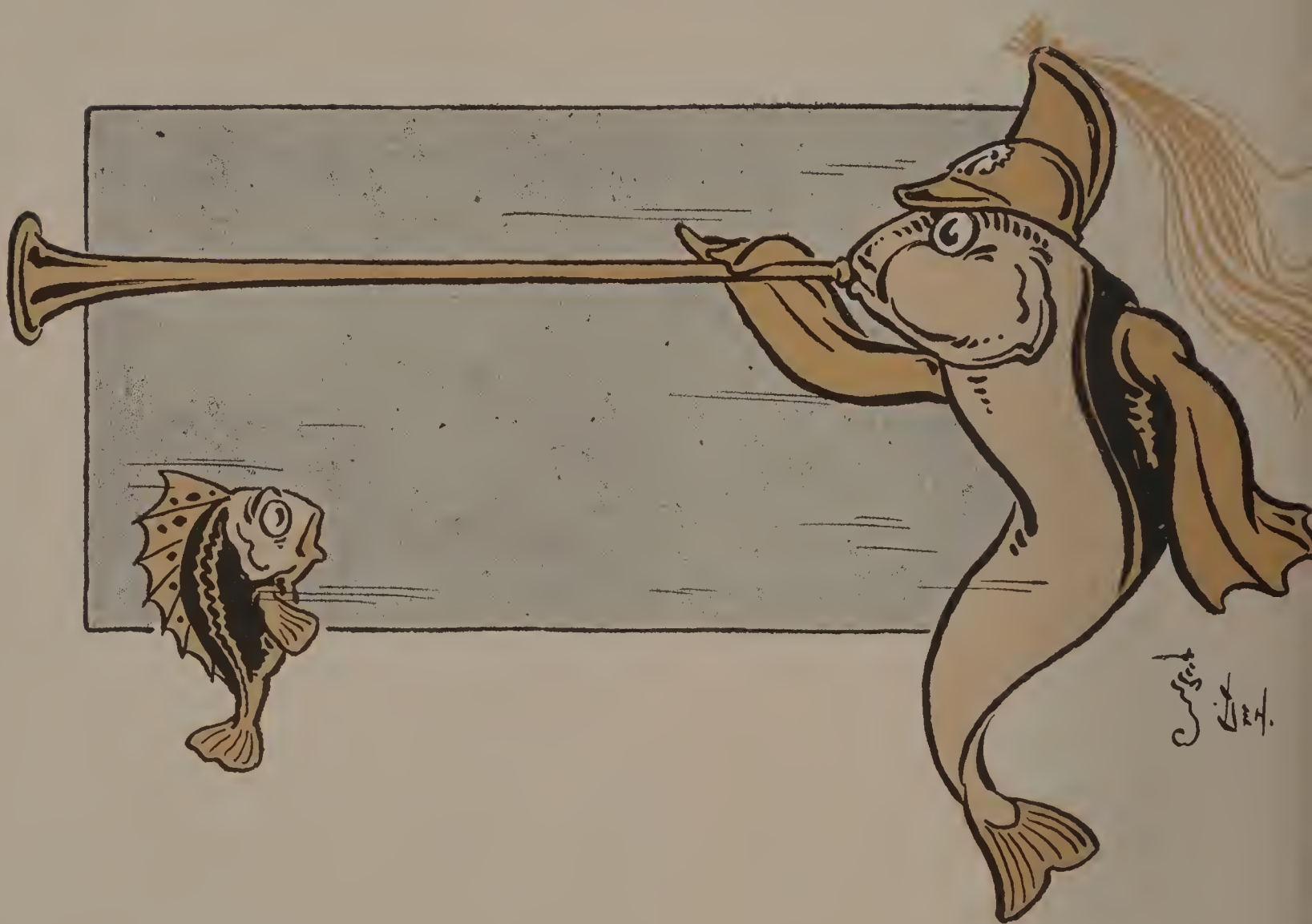
And then—there came a blare of trumpets. Silver dropped the knife, and Davy and the other Pirates stood as though turned to stone.

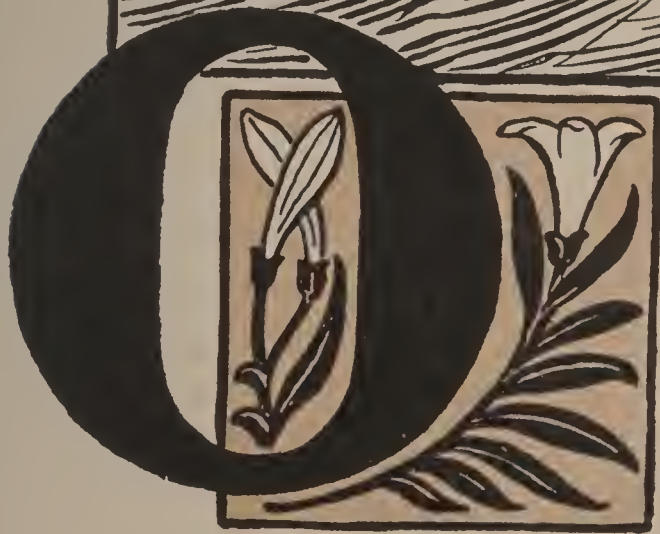
"Neptune!" cried Davy, in a solemn whisper.

A beautiful dolphin, all the colors of the rainbow, came into sight; then another, and another, and then hundreds, and Pearl, looking up, saw that they were harnessed to a great, gorgeous coach, made all of mother-of-pearl and coral. And in the coach sat a gigantic figure, with a long beard that reached to his waist. On his head was a

crown, and in his hand a scepter with three points like a pitchfork. In a voice of thunder he cried,

“Stop! I, Neptune, King of the Winds and Waves, command!”





CHAPTER XIX.

UP FROM THE DEPTHS.

ON getting Mother Carey's message from the Chickens, Neptune at once hurried to save Joe Miller, for he had been receiving many complaints about the way affairs were being managed in Davy Jones'

realm since the Pirates began to gain power there, and this, he thought, gave him a good chance to show his authority and teach Davy a lesson.

As you have seen, he arrived just in time, for in another instant Silver's knife would have put an end to Joe Miller.

Neptune paid no attention to Davy or the Pirates, but said to Joe,

"Come here, sir, and tell me what all this means."

Joe and Pearl ran to Neptune's side, and in a few words told him all that happened. His rage was terrible to behold. He shook his great head till the waves trembled, and, as the Ancient Mariner whispered to the Pie-man, many a ship on the surface of the sea must have felt the effects of that shake of Neptune's head. This seemed to appease his wrath somewhat, for when he spoke again his tone was more gentle, though still far from mild.

"How dare you do such a thing as you were about to do without first consulting me?" he demanded of Davy Jones.

"O, King Neptune," replied Davy, in a voice shaking with fear, "do not be too hard on poor old Davy. I meant well. My Pirates have insisted on having pumpkin pies, and I tried every way I could think of to raise some pumpkins for them. But I couldn't. At last I heard of Joe Miller and his wonderful secret for making pumpkins grow anywhere."

"Is that so, my boy?" asked Neptune.

"Yes, your Majesty," replied Joe, "I did know how. But when the Corn Dodger changed me into a pumpkin-head I forgot all about it."

"The Corn Dodger!" exclaimed Neptune. "So that Sprite has had a hand in this, too. Where is he now?"

When he heard that the Corn Dodger was a prisoner in Mother Carey's palace, he summoned the Fairy at once.

Mother Carey hurried before Neptune, and was pleasantly greeted, for the King of the Waves knew how good she was, and considered her the best of all the fairies who governed his regions.

But when he asked her to bring the Corn Dodger before him, Mother Carey was obliged to bend her head and say,

“Alas, Mighty King, I cannot, for in the excitement of Joe’s capture by the Pirates the Corn Dodger escaped from my palace, and, though I have searched every nook and grotto, I cannot find him.”

“Ask the Canner,” cried the Ancient Mariner. “He always keeps an eye on the Corn Dodger.”

But the Canner was nowhere to be found, as you will of course guess.

“The Corn Dodger must be found,” said Neptune. “I can confer a special power on him so that he can change this boy back as he was, and then he will remember his secret.





"The Corn Dodger must be found," said Neptune.

He will be willing to give it to Davy, and may then return, with his little cousin, to his home on land. Find the Corn Dodger, and I will forgive everyone."

But, of course, no one could find the Corn Dodger, though Davy and the Pirates searched everywhere. For well Davy knew that Neptune would punish him severely unless he got Joe out of the trouble which the Pirates' desire for pumpkin pies had caused.

"Hurry," cried Neptune. "I am wasting time. If the Corn Dodger is not found in five more minutes I shall visit swift punishment on all connected with Davy Jones' locker!"

But at the end of five minutes Davy was obliged to throw himself at Neptune's feet, saying,

"Alas, King Neptune, I beg for mercy. The Corn Dodger has disappeared."

"Then," said Neptune, "I suppose I must think of your punishment. Let me see—what shall it be?"

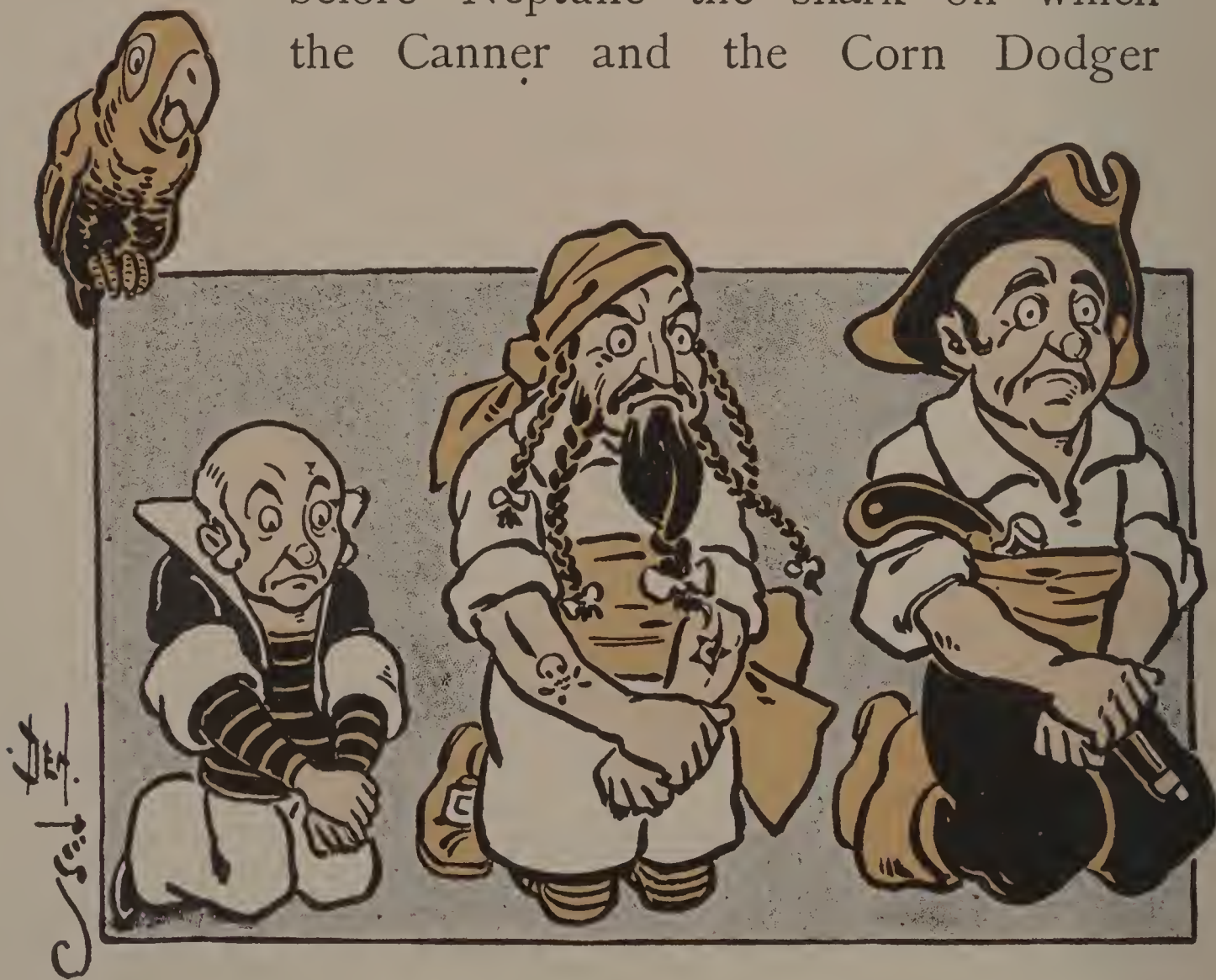
Davy and the Pirates knelt trembling as

Neptune thought. At the end of a minute he had not hit on anything that he felt would be terrible enough. At the end of two minutes he raised his head, and smiled.

"I have it," he said.

But what the punishment was to be will never be known, for just then Mother Carey cried,

"Pause, I beg you, your Majesty, till you receive this message." One of her guards led before Neptune the shark on which the Canner and the Corn Dodger





had escaped. Tied about his tail was a note, addressed to Mother Carey, which said :

IF YOU EVER COME TO BERMUDA, DROP
IN TO SEE ME. I HAVE A SECOND-HAND
DIVING-SUIT WHICH BELONGS TO YOU.

IKE CANNEM.

(My motto is—" I CAN.")

Then Mother Carey explained about having given the Corn Dodger the diving-suit to pro-

tect himself from the Canner, and the rest was plain.

“Well,” said Neptune, “if the Corn Dodger is in Bermuda, that doesn’t alter the fact that he must be caught.”

“But who’s to do it?” asked Davy Jones.

“Who?” repeated Neptune, with a frown. “Why, every one of you. Away to Bermuda at once, I command you, and never dare to return till you have found the Corn Dodger and made him change Joe Miller back into his right form. Away!”

There was another flare of the trumpets, the dolphins fell into line before the great coach, and, with a wave of his scepter, Neptune was away.

Davy and the others looked after him blankly, and it was quite a minute before any one spoke. Then Mother Carey said,

“We must start at once. Joe and Pearl, give me your hand, each of you.”

She clasped her fingers over Pearl’s and Joe’s, there was a little ruffling of the waves as her wings began to move, and in the next instant Mother Carey, the children, her Chick-

ens, Davy, the Ancient Mariner, the Pieman and the Pirates were shooting upwards through the water. A moment later Pearl looked back, and Davy Jones' locker was just visible, with some one, whom she took to be Bridget, in the doorway, waving a dish-towel in farewell.





CHAPTER XX.

THE PIEMAN'S TREACHERY.



As they floated upward, White Cap, one of Mother Carey's Chickens, said to Pearl,

"Aren't you dreadfully glad that you are going home?"

"Home?" said Pearl. "But we're not.

We're going to Bermuda, and I don't know where that is."

"To be sure," said Anemone, another of the Chickens, "it's a long distance from your home in Vermont, on some islands out in the ocean, but it's land, any way."

"Besides," said Nautilus, a third of the Chickens, "why can't one of us go to Vermont and tell your papa and mamma, so that they can come to Bermuda for you?"

Mother Carey overheard this, and immediately dispatched White Cap, Anemone and Nautilus with the message to Farmer Pringle and his wife, telling them that Joe and Pearl were safe and sound, and asking them to take the first steamer for Bermuda. The three Chickens kissed Pearl and Joe good-bye, and were off like a flash of light.

Luckily, it was midnight when the strange party arrived at the surface of the ocean and stopped to take breath on a flat reef with fantastic pinnacles called "North Rock," a few miles distant from the main island of the Bermudas, which, as you know, are made up of a number of islands of all sizes, some of them inhabited

and others quite desert. The Pieman and Pearl, being the only persons in the party who would not cause surprise by their appearance unannounced, were sent to the main island to prepare the natives and tourists, of whom there are always many from Northern cities, for the arrival of the others. Lest the Pieman should attempt to run away, Wave Crest and Scallop, two Chickens, were sent with



them, first putting on their invisible caps, so that they could not be seen by human eyes.

In an hour or two they returned, having engaged rooms for every one at the principal hotel, and the whole party, under cover of night, hurried ashore and were soon in bed, getting a much-needed rest.

With the first rays of the sun, Mother Carey and Davy Jones were up and off to find the Canner's factory, where they knew they should discover the Corn Dodger.

"The only fear is," said Davy, "that he's cut him up already. In which case ——"

"In which case," said Mother Carey, "I am sure we shall still find some way of making him do what we wish. Anyway, we must find him."

The Canner's factory was a long building, made of the white stone of which every house on the island is built. Over the door was a sign, which read:

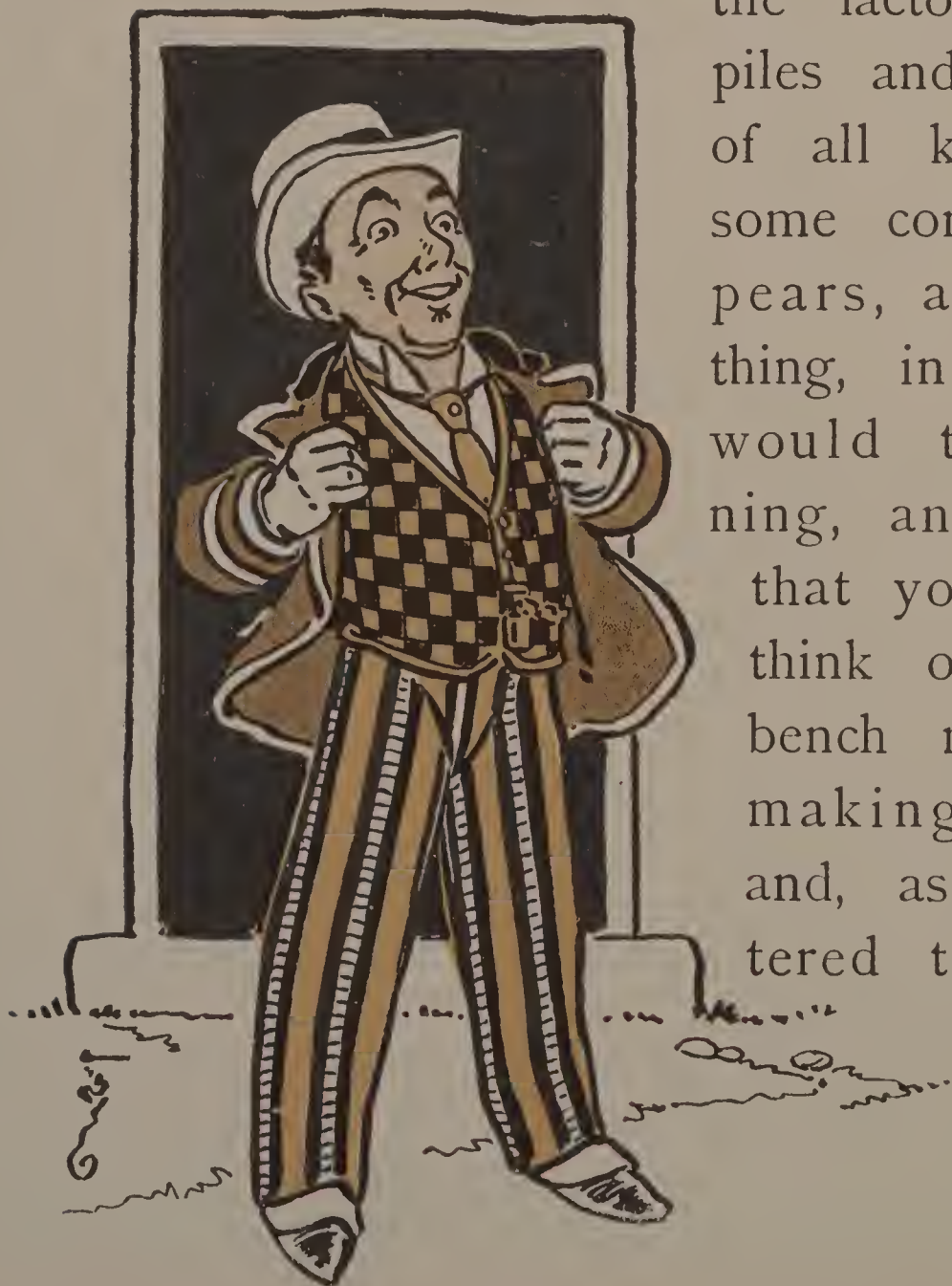
AMERICAN AND CANADIAN CANNING COMPANY

"WE CAN CAN."

Ike Cannem himself greeted them, and pretended to be very glad to see them. He asked Mother Carey if she wished him to send the diving-suit to her home by express, or if she had come to take it herself. But when Davy told him what they were there for his manner changed.

"Give up the Corn Dodger?" he cried. "Never! Besides, even if I were willing, it is too late. Come."

He led the way to the canning-room in the factory. There were piles and piles of cans of all kinds and sizes, some containing peaches, pears, apples—everything, in fact, that you would think of canning, and some things that you never would think of. At a workbench men were busy making cans of tin, and, as the party entered the room, they



had just finished the largest can you ever saw.

It was five feet high, as big round as a barrel, and would hold gallons of anything.

"See that?" asked the Canner. "That's for the Dodger. I thought at first of putting him into many small cans, but then I thought it would be a pity to scatter him around at random, so I'm going to put him all in that one giant can and send him to the President of the United States, who is very fond of canned corn. When he gets this, I think that he will appoint me to some nice office."

Mother Carey and Davy scarcely heard what the Canner was saying, they were so horrified.

"But," said Mother Carey, "you haven't——"

"Cooked the Dodger?" said the Canner. "Oh, dear, yes—long ago. That is, nearly all of him. All but these." And he took from his pocket a handful of kernels of corn, which he shook. "I'm going to plant these," he said.

With sorrowful hearts Mother Carey and Davy Jones hurried back to the hotel, where they told the others what they had learned.

The Pirates were very angry, and Joe and Pearl were in despair. Mr. and Mrs. Pringle, the Schoolmaster and Hiram had already started from home on a new automobile-boat that would bring them to Bermuda that same day, and the children thought of how disappointed they would all be to hear that Joe must always remain a pumpkin-boy!

"So the Canner won't give up the Corn Dodger, eh?" said Captain Kidd. "We'll see. Come, boys," he shouted to the other Pirates, "we used to know these islands pretty well, eh? And our word was law here, and we were feared, weren't we?"

"Right you are, Captain," said the others.

"Then on to the canning factory," said Captain Kidd, drawing his cutlass, and the Piratical crew started on a run, with Captain Kidd leading and Long John Silver stumping along last, with Ruffles on his shoulder, screeching,

"Pieces of eight! Scuttle the ship! Scuttle the ship!"

Naturally, the Pirates' appearance in the streets made a sensation, but not so much at this particular time as it ordinarily would.

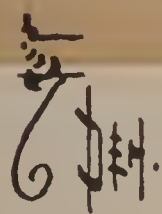


The Piratical crew started on a run with Captain Kidd leading.

For, strangely enough, the people in Bermuda were in almost the same trouble that the Pirates were. They were hungry for pumpkin pies!

All through the country, north and south, everywhere that pumpkins grow, there had been a scarcity of the vegetable, and, as we said before, you know how it is when people cannot get a thing. They begin to want it more than they would if they could have plenty. So, when the Bermudans heard that all this commotion was caused by a desire for pumpkin pies, they forgot about the strange appearance of the Pirates and thought only of pumpkins.

The sight of Joe,
Mother Carey



thought, when she found this to be the state of affairs, might be dangerous to the people, and perhaps, too tempting, so she told her Chickens to be very careful of him and not to let him get far from them during her absence.

Now, the Pieman, being the only mortal who had been concerned in the transformation and abduction of Joe, heard of the coming of Farmer Pringle and the other Vermonters with fear and trembling. What would they do to him? he thought. He told his fears to the proprietor of the hotel, and asked for protection.

The proprietor of the hotel was a man who always thought of his guests and how to please them. He had been much worried over his inability to furnish them with pumpkin pies, and now he saw a chance to give them what they craved. So he said to the Pieman:

"Look here, Mr. Doe, if I promise to save you from the anger of those people, you must do something for me."

"I'll do anything in the world," said the Pieman.

"I hold you to your promise," said the Pro-

prietor, promptly, "and what I demand is this: You must get that pumpkin boy for me. If you do I'll put you on board a fast steamer sailing from here in an hour, with plenty of money for your needs, and you can escape punishment."

The Pieman hesitated, but fear of what Farmer Pringle would do to him became at last so strong in his heart that he consented to the Proprietor's demands.



He felt rather sneaky, I have no doubt, as he went to the room where Joe Miller was staying in hiding, and passed the guard of Chickens, who let him go in without suspecting his evil designs.

"Come, Joe," said he to the boy, "it must be dull in here all alone. Wouldn't you like to take a walk?"

"But Mother Carey said I wasn't to go away from the hotel," said Joe.

There was a double meaning in the Pieman's words as he replied,

"O, that needn't worry you. You won't go away from the hotel."

So, leading the innocent pumpkin-boy by the hand, the Pieman passed out of the room, by the guileless guard of fairies, and down stairs to the hotel office, where the Proprietor awaited him.

"Is this the young man?" asked the Proprietor, taking Joe by the hand.

"This is the young man," said the Pieman.

"I'm pleased to meet him," said the Proprietor, at the same time slipping a well-filled purse into the Pieman's hand. "Won't you

let me take him around a little, and show him the kitchen?"

"Certainly," said the Pieman, and then, in a whisper, "what time does the boat go?"

"In fifteen minutes," said the Proprietor. "Come on, my little man."

The Pieman turned away as the Proprietor led Joe in behind the desk and through the doorway marked "PRIVATE." Perhaps he could not bear to see the last of the lad whom he had so treacherously deceived. Perhaps he



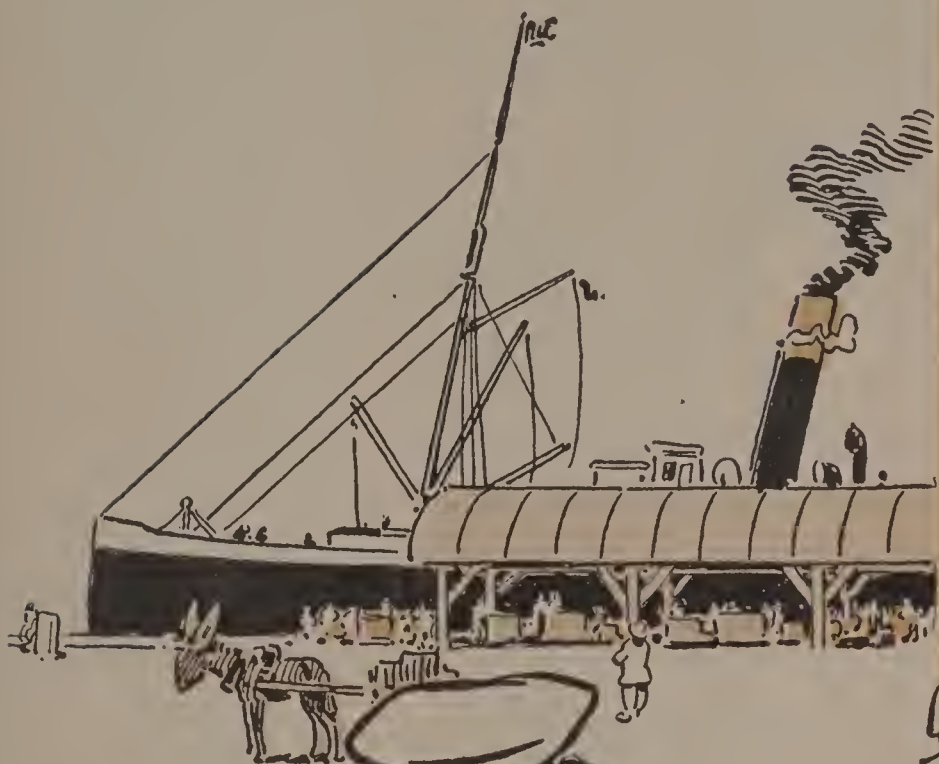
was looking for the ship, which lay at the wharf below. But the next moment he saw a procession coming



up the road.

It was Farmer Pringle, his wife, the Schoolmaster and Hiram, and they were calling,

"Joe! Pearl! Where are you?"



The Pieman ran out at the back door, and scampered for the wharf, without looking back.





CHAPTER XXI.

JOE MILLER'S RETURN.

IF you have ever been lost, and then found, you remember how glad your parents were to see you. So you can imagine the greeting which Mr. and Mrs. Pringle gave

Pearl. The Schoolmaster, too, gave her so many kisses that she lost count, and Hiram told her how ashamed he was for his part in having caused Joe and her so much trouble.

Of course, Hiram was speedily forgiven, because everyone knew that he had been influenced by the Pieman, and that he had probably learned a wholesome lesson.

"But where is Joe?" asked Farmer Pringle, as soon as he had kissed his little girl.

"Right upstairs in his room," said Pearl. But as they started upstairs Pearl stopped them, to tell them how kind Mother Carey had been, and that they must not blame poor Davy Jones too much for all that had happened to them.

Just see how Fortune rules us! If they had gone directly to Joe's room and found him absent, they would have searched for him and, most likely, found him before it was too late. Or, anyway, they might have caught the wicked Pieman before his boat sailed. By the time that Pearl had told them whom to punish and whom to forgive, the Pieman's steamer was a speck in the distance, and as for poor Joe——!

But at last Mrs. Pringle's impatience to see Joe was too much, and she said,

"Never mind the rest of the story now, Pearl, till after I've given that poor boy a good hug and kiss."

"Yes," said the Schoolmaster, "and I want to hear if he discovered anything of interest under the sea."

"Come on," said Farmer Pringle. "Joe first, and then Mother Carey and all the other kind folk who have helped you two. As for the wicked ones, we shall see!"

But when they went up to Joe's room, the Chickens told them that he had gone for a walk about the hotel with the Pieman. They looked everywhere, upstairs and downstairs, for him, but Joe was nowhere to be found.

Neither was the Pieman. Then there was scurrying about to catch him, for everyone supposed that he had taken Joe somewhere and hidden him.

"But," said Mother Carey, "he cannot get off the island, for no boat sails till to-morrow." Little did they guess the truth, and that at that very instant Joe Miller, or the pump-

kin-boy that had taken his place, was spread over several large pie plates, in the hotel pantry, while the chef was adding to the printed bill of fare for dinner the words,

“SPECIAL TO-DAY—PUMPKIN PIE.”

Of course, Mother Carey was very angry with her Chickens for



having allowed the Pieman to hoodwink them, and they set off to search every part of the islands for the missing Joe, with their minds made up to find him at any cost.

In the meantime, the Pirates, having made a raid on Ike Cannem's factory, returned in triumph, bearing on their shoulders the great can, which they had found all filled and soldered up, with a label in many colors across the front, saying,

"CANNED CORN—DODGER VARIETY. VERY FINE."

A pitched battle had taken place between the Pirates and the hands at the canning factory, in which the Pirates had come off victors, as their having the can of corn proved.

Singing a merry song, they came up the road leading to the hotel, and placed the great can on the lawn.

"We've got the Dodger," cried Blackbeard, "he's in the can."

"Yes," cried John Silver, "but what good is that? He's all in little pieces, and I never heard of a Sprite in little pieces being any use at all."

Farmer Pringle was examining the big can as the Pirates spoke. He tapped it with his cane, and as he did so a voice came from within, saying, .

"Let me out, let me out, and I'll do anything you wish."

"It's the Dodger's voice," said Farmer Pringle. Then, addressing the can,

"If we let you out can you change Joe Miller back into a boy again?"

"Yes," said the Dodger. "Only let me out."

"But you're all in little bits, aren't you?"

"That's nothing," said the voice. "Once a mowing-machine cut me up smaller than the Canner has, and I joined together all right. Let me out, and you'll see."

No one in the party had a can-opener, however, except the Ancient Mariner, and he was at first afraid to open the can, dreading the wrath of the Dodger for having got into this fix on the Mariner's account. Finally, he was forced to cut the can and out popped the Dodger.

As the cover of the can was raised, the Sprite seemed to regain his shape instantly,

and stood before them as they had last seen him, except for his corn-tassel whiskers and a little bare spot over his right shoulder, where the Canner had taken off the few kernels that he intended to plant.

“And now,” said the Dodger, “where’s Joe? I



want to change him back as he should be, and have all this thing over with. I'll never try any more tricks such as I played on him. Let him appear."

But the Chickens, who had returned from a careful search of the whole island, shook their heads when asked if they had found Joe.

"Where can he be?" asked Davy Jones. "He hasn't dried up and gone to seed, I hope."

"And where's the Pieman?" asked Mother Carey. "It seems strange that neither can be found."

As she spoke they heard a cry of alarm, and saw Pearl running toward them from the hotel dining-room, with a bill of fare in her hand.

"Look, look!" cried the little girl, holding the sheet of paper toward her father. "They've got pumpkin pie for dinner."

"I see it all," cried Mother Carey, and, pointing to the Proprietor who was trying to hide behind the door, she added,

"Seize that man!"

The Pirates rushed at the Proprietor and made him a prisoner. Thoroughly frightened, he confessed his wicked act, and said,

"Please forgive me. My guests were making my life miserable with their calls for pumpkin pies, and I had to do it or close my hotel."

"I sympathize with you,"



said Davy Jones, "but in this case I wish you had closed the hotel."

"But what's to be done?" cried Farmer Pringle. "Are we never to see Joe again?"

"And are we to be banished from our home under the sea forever?" shouted the Pirates.

"If I only had the pumpkin that made Joe's head," said the Corn Dodger, "I could do the trick."

"But that's made into pies, too, isn't?" asked Mother Carey of the Proprietor.

"No," said the Proprietor. "That was hollow, and I threw it overboard."

"Overboard!" yelled the Pirates, and some of them started for the shore to leap into the water and search for the pumpkin.

But at that moment, as all turned their faces seaward, they saw a strange sight. The sun had set, and over the waves appeared what at first they took for the rising moon. But on closer inspection they saw that it was not the moon, but a grinning pumpkin, lighted from within by some magic power.

"It's Joe Miller's pumpkin-head!" cried Davy Jones.



Mother Carey was silent for a moment, and stood with her wand pointed toward the strange object, which seemed to be rising higher and higher above the waves. Then she spoke, in a low, musical voice, saying,

“Pumpkin-head, I command you, in the name of Neptune, King of the Winds and Waves, approach!”

Instantly the pumpkin began to sink toward the sea. In another moment it rested on the water, and then came slowly toward land.

All ran to the water's edge, and, as the pumpkin touched the coral shore, the Corn Dodger, stretching out his hand, said,

“Higgery, piggery, diggery den !

Joe Miller, turn into a boy again !”

“Oh,” cried Pearl, “it's sunk !”

And indeed everyone but the Corn Dodger and Mother Carey thought that they had seen the last of the Pumpkin-Head. Farmer Pringle stormed, his wife wept and Pearl sobbed pitifully.

But suddenly their tears gave way to shouts of joy, for the water was churned into a cloud of foam, in which the Pumpkin-Head appeared, several feet above them and some distance from shore.

As all eyes were fixed upon it, it seemed to be changing its shape, to be losing its outlines, and struggling to become something else.

“I know what's the matter,” cried the Corn



“Pumpkin-head, I command you approach.”

Dodger. "My power to make the transformation doesn't begin till midnight."

"Must we wait?" demanded the Pirates.

"Yes," said the Sprite, "unless — unless you all set your watches ahead to twelve o'clock!"

This was no sooner said than everyone who had a watch turned the hands around till they pointed to twelve o'clock.

"Now," said the Corn Dodger, "it's all right!"

And it was: for when they looked at the Pumpkin-Head it began to have a body, then arms and legs, and finally, with a struggle, it changed entirely, and before them in the air appeared Joe Miller, just as he had been before the Corn Dodger granted his hasty wish in the cornfield.

Without a word he rushed into Pearl's arms, and the two little cousins met in a fond, though damp, embrace.

"And now," said the Corn Dodger, when he saw that Joe was all right once more, "if you'll excuse me, I'll be going. I see the Canner coming along the shore, and this is no place for me. Good-bye!"

Before anyone could stop him, the Sprite dashed away, and the last seen of him he was nearing a cornfield, with the Canner in hot pursuit, but with little chance of overtaking him. Let us hope the Dodger was not caught!





CHAPTER XXII.

AND LAST.

HERE was a great celebration in the hotel parlors that evening, and Joe and Pearl were the center of attraction. The Proprietor destroyed all the pumpkin pies that

the Pieman's wickedness had provided, and in return Joe gave him his secret for growing pumpkins, so that by next season he was sure to have plenty for his guests.

The boy remembered every detail of his secret, the moment he regained his proper shape, and, of course, told Davy Jones just how to make pumpkins grow in great numbers in his garden under the seas. So Davy, happy as could be, said good-bye, and, with the Pirates, Midshipman Easy and the Ancient Mariner, bade Bermuda farewell, leaped overboard and was seen no more.

Joe and Pearl were for having Mother Carey go home with them for a long visit, but the good fairy pleaded that neither she nor her Chickens had the proper gowns for such a trip. Besides, she was eager to return to her palace in the coral groves. So she, too, said good-bye, and vanished, but not before she had promised to come to see the Pringles in Vermont next summer.

Since that day there has never been a pumpkin famine anywhere in the world. Indeed, the luscious vegetables grow in places



where they never used to be known. Very likely this is due to Joe Miller, who gave his wonderful secret to everyone who asked for it; so that many a boy, as he makes a

Jack-o'lantern for Hallowe'en, can thank him for having kept pumpkins from being forgotten.

The Pringle farm is to-day more famous than ever for its pumpkins, all raised under Joe Miller's direction. As he works away in the pumpkin patch, Pearl, who is now quite a young lady, often comes to watch him, and when the corn-shocks in the field near by rustle, she will say,

"Joe, I guess the Corn Dodger is around to-day."

And an old, green and red Parrot, perched on Pearl's shoulder will flap his wings when he hears this, and say,

"Pieces of eight, pieces of eight! Give us pumpkin pies!"

This makes Joe laugh, and he replies,

"Be quiet, Ruffles, or we'll send you back to John Silver."

They often hear from Mother Carey and Davy Jones, and now and then comes a message from the Ancient Mariner, which always ends with,

"Give my regards to my friend, Mr. Cruller."

Of course, he means the Pieman. By the way, what became of him? But why speak of disagreeable people!





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